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THE TARGUM TO 'THE SONG OF  
SONGS'; THE BOOK OF THE APPLE;  
THE TEN JEWISH MARTYRS; A  
DIALOGUE ON GAMES OF CHANCE

Translated from the  
HEBREW AND ARAMAIC.

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TO MY SISTER,  
MISS EMMA GOLLANCZ,  
EVER-HELPFUL AND DEVOTED,  
IN AFFECTION AND ESTEEM.





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## INTRODUCTION.

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### The Targum to the "Song of Songs."

Whatever theories have been advanced in the past, or may still be advanced with regard to the scope and meaning of the "Song of Songs" itself, there can be no doubt as to the character of the Aramaic version, a translation of which is given in this volume. The word "version" is scarcely the correct term; we should rather anticipate and say at once that it is a paraphrase, and just such a paraphrase as will set at rest any conjecture as to what the author himself (whoever he was) thought with regard to the original purpose of this fascinating smaller book of the Bible which he endeavoured to elucidate.

The Targum-paraphrase of the Books of the Bible, included in the term "Kethubim" or "Hagiographa," was for a time attributed to one named José or Joseph, surnamed "the Blind," Chief of a Rabbinical Seminary at Sura in the third century;

but it has since been proved that the Targums of the several books of the Hagiographa owe their origin to various authors. The Targumist of the "Song" was evidently not troubled with any theories as to whether it had a literal, mystical, or allegorical meaning. After all, there was consistency in the forms and expressions employed in the original; the name of King Solomon did appear in the course of the Book, and the pastoral character as regards scenery and language was quite in keeping with the supposition of Solomon's authorship of it. But the real question for him to determine was, what the original author intended the Book to be, whether "a bridal drama and song," "a pastoral eclogue," "a dramatic poem," or "an epithalamium of a pastoral kind," to be taken seriously and in its literal sense; or, on the other hand, whether the author himself regarded it merely as the framework upon which to construct some higher and wider conception.

Judging from internal evidence, the writer of this elaborate Aramaic paraphrase clearly favoured the latter view, that adopted in Rabbinic Tradition,

in which "the beloved" is taken to mean "God," and "the bride" to mean "the Congregation of Israel"; for his version from beginning to end excludes any *literal* interpretation of the Song. In a word, the Targumist handles the "Song of Songs" as an allegorical outline of Jewish history from the Exodus to the coming of the Messiah and the expected building of the third Temple. "In the Christian Church the Talmudical interpretation imported by Origen was all but universally received. . . . The strongest argument on the side of the allegorists is the matrimonial metaphor so frequently employed in the Scriptures to describe the relation between God and Israel."

We need go no further than the Targumist's paraphrase of the very first words of the Song, "the Song of Songs which is Solomon's," to prove that his intention was to give the fullest and widest application to the words of his original. He accordingly enumerates eight songs before he comes to the "ninth song," sung by Solomon, King of Israel, and even refers to a "tenth song," to be sung by the Children of the Exile in the days to come.

It is unnecessary to multiply examples in this brief introduction, as a perusal of the translation will show in a more satisfactory manner how the author, writing in the Aramaic dialect, set himself the task of supplying the Song of Songs of the Bible with a running Hagadic or allegorical commentary.

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### Sepher Ha-tapuah (Liber De Pomo).

For the purpose of the present publication, it will be sufficient to note that the little treatise entitled "the Book of the Apple" belongs to the cycle of Pseudo-Aristotelian writings. Maimonides is among those who hold that it cannot be the work of Aristotle. Before the test of criticism was applied, many works which have since been shown to be spurious were for a long time attributed to Aristotle. As it has been well put: "The lack of all critical sense in the Middle Ages, and the general prejudice in favour of Aristotle, whose genuine writings contain many passages in which he rises from heathenism to almost pure monotheism,

blinded even the most discerning to the fact that many of the works ascribed to him could not possibly have been his."

We need not here discuss the point as to whether the smaller book before us was of Greek origin; we are but dealing with the Hebrew text, and this, according to the words of Abraham Ibn Chisdai, was translated by him from the Arabic, though he speaks of the work itself as having been "composed by the sages of Greece." The object of the treatise is clear. Similar in scope to Plato's *Phaedon*, it represents a conversation in dialogue-form between Aristotle and several friends or disciples, not alone on the all-engrossing subject of the Immortality of the Soul, but also incidentally on the merits of Philosophy, and the value of its study for the ends of investigating the Truth. The allusions are interesting which refer to Noah as "the father of the wise men who excelled in the knowledge and understanding of the Creator," and to Abraham as "a greater sage than the rest."

The work derives its name from the fact that Aristotle, while conversing on his death-bed in his

## INTRODUCTION.

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last moments, in order to sustain himself in this exhausting effort, is represented as holding in his hand (in place of the more usual smelling-flask) an apple, the scent of which refreshes him so that he is able to complete his task.

The Hebrew printed text has appeared several times, but it is faulty and unsatisfactory. The accompanying translation has been prepared after collating and combining various printed versions and several manuscripts. Even with the help of these MSS., there are still a few passages somewhat obscure, owing doubtless to corrupt passages that baffle critical ingenuity ; but the translator has done his best to make the original as intelligible as possible.

Steinschneider refers to the high estimation in which the name of Aristotle was held by Jews, even by Jewish philosophers and writers. His philosophy made him a *persona grata* with the mystics, one of whom regards him as "our friend, for he is one who enlighteneth our soul"; and even the great Maimonides speaks of him in flattering terms.

As one of the pieces in this volume is a work



by Leo de Modena, it may not be inappropriate to conclude these brief remarks by reproducing also the following sentiments with regard to Aristotle, occurring in a work, "Ari Noham," hitherto attributed, upon insufficient evidence, to this writer. The author says: "May the soul of Aristo rest in Eden in the Garden of Life, by virtue of his noble and acceptable utterances. By my life I love him with a perfect love, for he was a Father in Wisdom. Many an exalted sentiment did Aristo utter in agreement with those of our Rabbis; and, by reason of the influence of his clear understanding, did he determine righteous rules and sayings. Our Rabbis have indeed remarked: A sage is even greater than a prophet. As for this man, he was the pick of philosophers, inasmuch as he adduces a proof for every argument. And what though he be a Greek! He laboured to establish the idea of God's Unity in the government of the world; and the science of pure philosophy is intimately bound up with that of the Kabbala."

(*Vide* Steinschneider's *Hebraische Uebersetzungen des Mittelalters*, p. 267 sqq., and *Cf.* Blau's excellent contribution to the subject in his *Leo Modena's Briefe und Schriftstücke*).

## “These things I remember ;” or, the Story of the Ten Jewish Martyrs.

The Midrash or Story which is here rendered into English takes its name from the first two words of Psalm xlii., verse 5, and is called in the original “Midrash Ele Eskera,” or “the narration of the things I remember.” For obvious reasons it is also called the Story of the Ten Jewish Martyrs, as the subject-matter deals with the last moments in the lives of ten martyrs of the Jewish race, some of whom lived about the time of the destruction of the Second Temple. The gist of this Midrash is popularly known from the form in which it occurs in the Additional Service for the Day of Atonement (and is said by some to have been named after it), and from another version embodied in the liturgy for the Fast-Day of Ab.

Without entering into a critical study of the various versions dealing with this interesting theme, (for the names of the martyrs in the several versions vary), I must point out that there exists a diversity

of opinion as regards the contemporary activity of the sages to whom reference is made. On the one side we have ranged against this theory authorities like Zunz,\* while, on the other side, Graetz is in favour of regarding the Ten Sages who suffered death for the sake of their religion (as narrated in the piece before us) as having lived at the same time. Jellinek (who first edited the Hebrew Text in 1853) seems rather to incline towards the view taken by Graetz, though he speaks of "the whole scenery of our Midrash being of a legendary formation." Zunz holds that the "Midrash Ele Eskera, pieced together from older sources, chiefly Talmudic and other legends, describes the execution of ten famous teachers of the Mischna, uniting these incidents, distant from each other in point of time, into one epic whole." As regards the "epic whole," we agree with Jellinek, that the introduction of the story of Rabbi Ishmael's birth is somewhat disturbing.

As an illustration of the composite character of this piece of literature, we need only instance the opening words of the Midrash which refer to the

\* Cf. *Die Gottesdienstlichen Vorträge*, 2nd Edit. p. 150.

pride of the trees in the hour of Creation. This idea is expressed in another Midrash, called "Midrash Conan," and it may be interesting to translate the passage in full. Referring to the Creation on the third day, the author says: "God created all the timber-trees and all the fruit-trees in the Garden of Eden and in this world. As soon as the Cedars of Lebanon, the trees of Bashan, and all the other mighty trees saw that they had been created first in the world, they forthwith exalted themselves on high and boasted. Thereupon the Almighty exclaimed: I hate pride and boast; Who but Myself has a right to be exalted in the world? He immediately created Iron, and the trees perceiving it, began to weep. God then asked them why they wept, and they replied: Because Thou hast created Iron wherewith we shall be cut down; and whilst we indulged the hope that nothing in the world was as high as ourselves, we now witness the instrument of our destruction. God answered them, saying: Upon yourselves will this depend; it is you who supply the handle for the axe wherewith you are cut down. I will suffer you to have

power over Iron, and Iron to rule over you. God thus suffered harmony to exist between these objects of Creation."

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## On Games of Chance.

ORIGINALLY CALLED "DEPART FROM EVIL."

BY LEO DE MODENA.

The work before us, as its name implies, is a remarkable little treatise on the evils of gambling, written in a pure Hebrew style, composed, judging from the author's own words, at the age of thirteen. We use the term "remarkable" not so much on account of the arguments adduced on the subject in question, but on account of the way in which the writer introduces Biblical phrases and expressions, uses them in a sense all his own, playing upon the words in a masterly manner, depending on the context not of the original but of his own arguments. The very title of this treatise, "Depart from Evil," is Biblical, the words occurring in Psalm xxxiv. v. 15, and Psalm xxxvii. v. 27.

I have endeavoured in most instances to indicate these Biblical sources by the use of inverted commas to mark the quotations, but it was found almost impossible to mark them in each and every case.

I have endeavoured also to reproduce the doggerel character of the original in the two poems which appear in the course of the translation, entitled "Against Games of Chance," and "In favour of Games of Chance."

In the main the translation is literal, except where the Hebrew idiom, more especially in the Talmudic excerpts, requires a paraphrase.

The Hebrew Text has been printed several times, in 1595 (Venice), in 1615 (Prague), and 1656 (Leyden); the accompanying translation is from the Hebrew Text of the Leipzig edition of 1683. [For dates, *cf.* Blau's work, p. 80, note.]

The author himself, Leo de Modena, or, as he is called in Hebrew, Jehuda Aryé Modena (1571-1648), an Italian by birth, was an undoubted scholar, not only in Hebrew and Rabbinics, but also in classics and the sciences. He is known both as

author and Rabbi, and was introduced to English readers in the middle of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth centuries by two English translations of his work on "the Rites and Customs of the Jews," written originally in Italian and translated into several European languages, the earlier English translation by Edmund Chilmead, of Christ Church, Oxford, in 1650, and the later by Simon Ockley, in 1707. In his own community he was known more on account of his curious nature. His was an example of contrasts, and no more characteristic example perhaps ever existed. Even his misfortunes—and the vicissitudes of existence in his case were many and bitter—were unable to bring him back to the centre of gravity, and he remained to the end, even as he had begun early, an unstable character. If, for example, we are to take the little treatise before us as a serious exponent of his own view on gambling (for we should remember that it is a dialogue in which the pros and cons are set forth), then his nature must indeed have been a strange and curious admixture, when we realise that the man who denounced gambling, himself fell

a victim to this evil passion, which had the effect of impoverishing him, in spite of the many occupations to which he devoted himself, evidently as a means of obtaining a livelihood. As Karpeles remarks, 'he writes poems and treatises against gambling, and is yet an inveterate player. . . . All his life he halts between superstition and unbelief, between vice and the struggle against it, between philosophy and rationalism, between enlightenment and Kabbala.'

And yet I am not sure whether Karpeles is not somewhat too severe in his estimate of the man whom he himself felt justified in calling "the product of the age" in which he lived.



# The Targum to the "Song of Songs,"

(TRANSLATED FROM THE ARAMAIC).

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## CHAPTER I.

v. 1.—*The song of songs, which is Solomon's.*

The songs and praises which Solomon, the prophet, King of Israel, spake by virtue of the spirit of prophecy before the Lord, Sovereign of the Universe.

Ten songs were (at various times) uttered in this world. The best of all these was the one spoken *first*, at the time when Adam received pardon for his guilt, on the Sabbath-day which came to shield him. It was then that he opened his mouth and said: "A Psalm, a Song for the Sabbath-day" (Ps. xcii).

The *second* song was uttered by Moses and the Children of Israel at the time when the Lord of the Universe divided for them the waters of the Red Sea; they all began to sing together, as it is written: "Then sang Moses and the Children of Israel" (Ex. xv. 1).

The *third* song the Children of Israel sang at the time when the well of water was given to them, as it is written, "Then sang Israel" (Numb. xxi. 17).

The *fourth* song was uttered by Moses, the prophet, when his hour had arrived to depart from the world, and he took occasion to reprove the people of Israel by its means, as it is said, "Give ear, ye heavens, and I will speak" (Deut. xxxii. 1).

The *fifth* song was spoken by Joshua, the son of Nun, when he waged war in Gibeon, and the sun and moon stood still during 36 hours, and they thus interrupted their habit of sounding the praises (of the Creator); whereupon Joshua opened his mouth, and sang the praises of God, as Scripture states, "Thus sang Joshua before the Lord" (Cf. Josh. x. 12).

The *sixth* song was that of Barak and Deborah, on the day when the Lord delivered Sisera and his camp into the hands of the Children of Israel, as it is written, "Then sang Deborah and Barak, the son of Abinoam" (Judges v. 1).

The *seventh* song was spoken by Hannah, when a son was granted her by Heaven, as Scripture

testifies, "And Hannah prayed (in prophecy) and said" (1 Sam. ii. 1).

The *eighth* song did David, King of Israel, sing for all the miracles which God had wrought on his behalf, as it is stated, "And David spake unto the Lord the words of this song" (2 Sam. xxii. 1) by virtue of the prophetic spirit.

The *ninth* song was sung by Solomon, King of Israel, by means of the Holy Spirit, before the Lord, Sovereign of the Universe.

And the *tenth* song will once be sung by the Children of the Exile, at the time when they shall be redeemed from captivity, as it is expressly stated by the hand of Isaiah, the prophet, "This song ye shall have for joy, as in the night when the Feast of Passover is hallowed, and for gladness of heart, as the people that went to appear before the Lord three times in the year, with all kinds of instruments of song and the sound of the tabret; to go to the mountain of the Lord and to worship before the Lord, the Strength of Israel" (*Cf.* Isaiah xxx. 29; a paraphrase of the Hebrew text, and varies from the Targum, *i.l.*).

v. 2.—*Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth: for thy love is better than wine.*

Solomon, the prophet, said: Blessed be the Name of the Lord, who hath given us the Law by the hand of Moses, the great Scribe—a Law inscribed upon the two tablets of stone, and hath given us the six orders of the Mischna and the Gemarah by oral tradition, and communed with us face to face, as a man that kisses his fellow out of the abundance of his affection, loving us, as He does, more than the seventy nations.

v. 3.—*Thine ointments have a goodly fragrance; thy name is as ointment poured forth, therefore do the maidens love thee.*

At the noise of Thy miracles and Thy mighty deeds which Thou didst work for Thy people, the House of Israel, all the peoples did tremble, they who heard the report of Thy might, and Thy goodly signs; and Thy Holy Name was heard through the whole earth, more choice than much anointing which was applied to the heads of kings and priests. Therefore did the righteous ones love to follow in

Thy goodly path, so that they might possess both this world and the world to come.

v. 4.—*Draw me; we will run after thee; the king hath brought me into his chambers; we will be glad and rejoice in thee. We will make mention of thy love more than wine; in uprightness do they love thee.*

As the children of the House of Israel departed from Egypt, the "Schechina" (Divine Presence) of the Lord of the Universe, led the way before them, by day with the pillar of cloud, by night with the pillar of fire. Whereupon the righteous of that generation exclaimed: "Sovereign of the Universe! we will be drawn after Thee, and run after Thy goodly way; so draw us nigh to the base of the mount Sinai, and give us Thy Law out of Thy treasure-chambers in Heaven. And we will rejoice and be glad with the twenty-two letters with which they are written; and we will make mention of them, and love Thy God-head, removing from after the idols of the nations; and all the righteous who serve in rectitude will fear Thee and love Thy statutes.

v. 5.—*I am black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon.*

When the Israelites fashioned the Calf, their faces darkened as those of the children of Ethiopia, who dwell in the dwellings of Kedar: when they turned in penitence, and their guilt was pardoned, the brilliant radiance of their countenance increased as that of the angels; (this occurred) when they made the curtains for the Tabernacle, and the Divine Presence once again dwelt in their midst; when Moses, their Teacher, went up to Heaven, and brought about peace between them and their King.

v. 6.—*Look not upon me, because I am swarthy, because the sun hath scorched me. My mother's sons were incensed against me, they made me keeper of the vineyards; but mine own vineyard have I not kept.*

The Assembly of Israel addresses the nations thus:—Despise me not, in that I am darker than you; (it is) because I have done according to your actions, and bowed down to the sun and moon;

false prophets have been the cause of it, in order to draw down upon me the fury of the anger of the Lord: they taught me to worship your idols, and to walk according to your laws, whilst the Sovereign of the Universe, my own God, I did not serve; I did not go after His laws, nor did I keep His statutes, nor His Law.

v. 7.—*Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon: for why should I be as one that is veiled beside the flocks of thy companions?*

When the time arrived for Moses, the prophet, to depart from this world, he said before the Lord: It is revealed to me that this people will sin and be carried into captivity. Inform me, I pray Thee, how they will sustain themselves, and how they will live among the nations, whose decrees are as violent as the heat, yea, as the heat of the noonday sun in the summer solstice; inform me whither they shall be carried away among the flocks of the children of Esau and Ishmael, who associate with Thy Service their idol-worship.

v. 8.—*If thou know not, O thou fairest among women, go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock, and feed thy kids beside the shepherds' tents.*

The Holy One, blessed be He, replied unto Moses, the prophet:—

If the Assembly of Israel, compared to a beautiful child, desire to wipe out the captivity, and that my soul compassionate her, let her walk in the ways of the righteous, and let her arrange her supplications by the mouth of the pastors and leaders of the generation; let her instruct her children, compared to the kids of the goat, to repair to the House of Assembly and the House of Learning; then, by that merit, they will be sustained in exile, until I send their King, Messiah, who will lead them gently to their Dwelling-Place, the Temple, which David and Solomon, the shepherds of Israel, shall build for them.

v. 9.—*I have compared thee, O my love, to a steed in Pharaoh's chariots.*

When Israel departed from Egypt, Pharaoh and



his host pursued after them with chariots and horsemen, and the way was hemmed in for them on the four sides. On the right and left there was the wilderness, full of fiery serpents; behind them was the wicked Pharaoh with his hosts; before them was the Red Sea. What did the Almighty do? He revealed Himself in the fullness of His might at the sea, dried up the sea itself, whilst the mire He did not dry up. Whereupon the wicked ones, the mixed multitude of strangers among them, exclaimed: He is able to dry up the waters of the sea, but He is unable to dry up the mire. At that moment the anger of the Lord waxed against them, and He was about to drown them in the waters of the sea, in the same manner as Pharaoh and his host were drowned, had it not been for Moses, the prophet, who spread forth his hands before the Lord, and removed the anger of the Lord from them, while he and the righteous of that generation opened their mouths and sang songs, and they passed in the midst of the Red Sea on dry land, by virtue of the merit of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the beloved ones of the Lord.

v. 10.—*Thy cheeks are comely with plaits, thy neck with strings of jewels.*

Now when they went forth to the wilderness, the Lord spake unto Moses thus: How well adapted is this people, that I should give unto them the dictates of the Law, so that these might act as a bridle in their mouths, and they would not depart from the goodly path, just as the horse which has a bridle between its jaws does not depart (from the way)! And how fit is their neck to bear the yoke of My precepts, which would weigh upon them as the yoke upon the neck of the ox which ploughs in the field, and supports both himself and his master!

v. 11.—*We will make thee plaits of gold with studs of silver.*

Wherefore the word came unto Moses: Get thee up to the firmament, and I will give unto thee the two tablets of stone, hewn of the sapphire of My glorious throne, bright as pure gold, arranged in lines, written by My finger, upon which are chased the Ten Words, refined more than silver purified

seven times seven (corresponding to the number 49, that of the methods by which the subjects therein contained are interpreted), and I will give them by thy hand unto the people of the House of Israel.

v. 12.—*While the king sitteth at his table my spikenard sendeth forth its fragrance.*

But while Moses, their Teacher, was in the firmament, in order to receive the two tablets of stone, the Law and the Ordinance, the wicked ones of that generation arose and made the golden calf, yea, and the mixed multitude among them, and corrupted their actions, and there went forth against them an evil name in the world, whilst previously their odour went forth in the world as fragrance; after that their odour was bad as the spikenard, altogether evil-smelling, and the plague of leprosy came down upon their flesh.

v. 13.—*My beloved is unto me as a bundle of myrrh, lying between my breasts.*

At that time the Lord said unto Moses: Go, descend, for the people have corrupted themselves,

leave Me, and I will destroy them; whereupon Moses turned and besought compassion from the Lord, and the Lord remembered unto them the binding of Isaac, whose father bound him on Mount Moriah upon the altar, and the Lord turned from His anger, and suffered His Divine Presence to dwell in their midst as heretofore.

v. 14.—*My beloved is unto me as a cluster of henna-flowers in the vineyards of En-gedi.*

Lo! then Moses descended, and the two tablets of stone in his hand; but through the sins of Israel his hands were heavy, and they fell and were broken; whereupon Moses went and crushed the calf, scattering its dust into the brook, and giving the Children of Israel to drink thereof, whilst he slew all those deserving of death, and ascended a second time into the Heavens, and prayed to God, offering an atonement for the Children of Israel.

It was then that he was commanded to make the tabernacle and the ark (of the covenant); then He instructed Moses, who made the tabernacle and all its vessels, including the ark; and he placed in the

ark the two later tablets, and appointed the sons of Aaron as priests, to bring the offering upon the altar, and to bring the oblation of wine in addition to the offering. But the question arises, Whence had they wine to bring as an oblation? Were they not in the wilderness? certainly no place fit for cultivation; nor had they figs, vines, nor pomegranates. Indeed, they went to the vineyards of En-gedi, and took thence clusters of grapes, and pressed wine out of them, and brought of it upon the altar as an oblation, the fourth part of a "hin" for each lamb.

v. 15.—*Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair, thine eyes are as doves'.*

When the Children of Israel did the will of their King, He did praise them in the company of the holy angels, saying, How comely are thy actions, O beloved daughter, Assembly of Israel, in the hour when thou doest My will, engaging in the dictates of My Law! And how right are thy deeds and pursuits, just as pigeons, as the young of doves,

which are proper to be brought as an offering upon the altar!

v. 16.—*Behold, thou art fair, my beloved, yea, pleasant; also our couch is green.*

The Assembly of Israel replies to the Sovereign of the Universe, and says: How comely is Thy Holy Presence at the time that Thou dwellest in our midst, and receivest our petitions with favour; at the time that Thou causest love to dwell in the home ("couch") and many children to be upon the earth, we increasing and multiplying, as the tree which standeth by the spring of water, whose branches are fair, and whose fruit is plentiful!

v. 17.—*The beams of our house are cedars, our rafters are firs.*

Solomon, the prophet, speaketh: How beautiful is the Temple of the Lord, built at my hands, of cedar-wood; but more beautiful still shall be the Temple which shall once in time to come be builded in the days of King Messiah, the beams of which shall be of the cedars of the Garden of Eden, and the pillars of firs, juniper and cypress-wood.

## CHAPTER II.

v. 1.—*I am the narcissus of Sharon, the rose of the valleys.*

The Assembly of Israel speaketh: As long as the Sovereign of the Universe suffers His Divine Presence to dwell in my midst, I am like the narcissus fresh from the Garden of Eden, my actions are comely as the rose in the plain of the flower-garden of Eden.

v. 2.—*As the rose among thorns, so is my love among the daughters.*

But when I turn aside from the path straight before me, and He removeth His Holy Presence from me, I am likened to the rose that blossometh forth among the thorns, which pierce and tear the branches, in the same manner as I am pierced and torn by the evil decrees (endured) in exile at the hands of the kings of the nations.

v. 3.—*As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I de-*

*lighted to sit down under his shadow, and his fruit was sweet to my palate.*

Just as the citron is comely and praised among the trees which do not produce, and all the world acknowledges it, so was the Lord of the Universe praised among the angels at the hour when He revealed Himself upon Mount Sinai, at the time when He gave the Law unto His people: at that time I longed to dwell under the shadow of His Presence, whilst the dictates of His Law were as spice to my palate, the reward for the observance of which was being laid up for me in the world to come.

v. 4.—*He brought me into the house of wine, and his banner over me was love.*

The Assembly of Israel saith: The Lord brought me to the House of the Seat of Learning for Israel on Sinai, that I might receive instruction in the Law by the mouth of Moses, the great Teacher; and I received the order of His Commandments in love, saying, All that the Lord has commanded I will do and hear.



v. 5.—*Stay ye me with raisins, comfort me with apples, for I am sick with love.*

Now at the time when I heard His voice speaking out of the midst of the flame of fire, I quaked and trembled ; and at last, out of fear, I approached Moses and Aaron, and said unto them : Receive ye the voice of the Words of the Lord out of the midst of the fire, and bring me to the House of Learning, and stay ye me with the Words of the Law, upon which the world rests as its foundation, and put chains upon my neck, explaining the holy expressions, which are as right to my palate as apples out of the Garden of Eden ; yea, I will occupy myself with them ; peradventure I may be healed by them, since I am sick with love.

v. 6.—*His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me.*

Whilst the people of the House of Israel were wandering in the wilderness, they were surrounded by four clouds of glory on the four sides, so that the Evil Eye should have no power over them : one (cloud) was above them, so that neither the heat

of the sun, nor the rain and hail, might overpower them; and one encompassed them from below ("from the rear"), just as a nurse carries the babe in her bosom; one ran before them a journey of three days, to thrown down mountains and to set up camps; it killed all the poisonous snakes and scorpions of the desert, and spied out for them a place fit for habitation, so that they might engage in the study of the Law, which had been given them by the right hand of the Lord.

v. 7.—*I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes, and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awaken the love, until it shall please.*

Thereupon Moses was informed by prophecy from the Lord to send messengers to spy out the land; and on returning from spying, they brought an evil report concerning the land of Israel, and were kept back for forty years in the wilderness. Then Moses opened his mouth and said: I adjure you, O Assembly of Israel, by the Lord of Hosts, and by the Strength of the land of Israel, that ye

presume not to go up to the land of Canaan, until it be the will of Heaven, and until all the generation of the men fit for war be completely extinct from out the camp ; (not) as your brethren, the children of Ephraim, presumed, who, having left Egypt thirty years before the appointed term had arrived, fell into the hands of the Philistines dwelling in Gath, and were killed ; but (I say) wait out the term of forty years, and then let your children go up and possess it (sc. the land).

v. 8.—*The voice of my beloved! Behold, he cometh; leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills.*

Saith Solomon, the King: While the people of the House of Israel were living in Egypt, their cry reached to heaven above, when lo and behold, the glory of the Lord was revealed unto Moses upon the mountain of Horeb, and He sent him into Egypt to redeem them and to bring them forth from under the bitter oppression of Egypt ; and he leapt over to the term appointed for the sake of the merit of their Patriarchs, compared as they are to the moun-

tains, and skipped over 190 years of the time of servitude by virtue of the righteousness of the Mothers, likened to the hills.

v. 9.—*My beloved is like a roe or a young hart: behold, he standeth behind our wall, looking in at the windows, glancing through the lattice.*

Saith the Assembly of Israel: At the time when in Egypt the glory of the Lord was revealed on the night of the Passover, and He slew every first-born, He rode upon a light cloud, and ran as a gazelle and a young antelope, protecting the houses wherein we were; and He was on the alert behind our wall, looking through the window, and peering through the lattice, and He saw the blood of the Passover-sacrifice and the blood of the command of the circumcision marked upon our door-posts, and He hastened from on high and saw His people eating of the Festival-sacrifice, roasted by fire, together with bitter herbs of diverse kinds and unleavened bread; and He had compassion with them, and did not suffer the Destroying Angel to do us any harm.

v. 10.—*My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.*

And in the morning my Friend began to say unto me: Arise, O Assembly of Israel, My beloved of old, beautiful in action, go forth, depart from the servitude of the Egyptians.

v. 11.—*For lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone.*

The term of servitude, like unto the winter, hath ceased, and the years concerning which I spake unto Abraham "between the parts" have been cut short, and the bitterness of the Egyptians compared to the incessant rain is over and gone, and ye shall no longer see them for ever.

v. 12.—*The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing (of birds) ["the time of pruning"] is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land.*

And there appeared Moses and Aaron, likened unto the palm-branches, who began to work miracles

in the land of Egypt; and the time for the slaying of the first-born had come, and the voice of the Holy Spirit of salvation, which I spake unto Abraham, your forefather (ye have heard already what I said unto him), viz.: "The nation which they shall serve I will judge, and afterwards they shall go forth with great substance." Now I desire to carry into action that which I have promised in word.

v. 13.—*The fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines in blossom give forth their fragrance. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.*

The Assembly of Israel, likened unto the first-fruits of the fig tree, opened her mouth and sang praises at the Red Sea; even children and sucklings praised with their tongues the Lord of the Universe; whereupon the Lord addressed them, saying: "Arise, O Assembly of Israel, My beautiful love, depart hence unto the land which I have promised unto thy fathers."

v. 14.—*O my dove, that art in the clefts of the*

*rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice: for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely.*

And as wicked Pharaoh pursued after the Children of Israel, they resembled the dove, shut up in the clefts of the rock, with the snake worrying her from within, and the hawk from without. Thus was the Assembly of Israel shut in on all four sides: in front of them there was the sea, behind them the pursuing enemy, on both sides the desert full of deadly serpents, which wound and kill men by their poisonous sting. Immediately Israel opened its mouth in prayer before the Eternal, and the Bath-Kol proceeded from Heaven and proclaimed: "O thou Assembly of Israel, resembling the neat dove, enclosed in the hiding-place of the clefts of the rock, and in the secret places of the stairs, show Me thy countenance and thy worthy deeds, and let Me hear thy voice, for sweet is thy voice in prayer (offered) in the smaller sanctuary, and thy countenance is comely by virtue of good actions."

v. 15.—*Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vineyards; for our vineyards are in blossom.*

No sooner had they passed over the Red Sea, than they murmured on account of water, whereupon wicked Amalek came down upon them, he who of old owed them a grudge in consequence of the birthright and the blessing, of which Esau was deprived by Jacob, the Patriarch. He came to wage war with Israel, owing to their neglect of the precepts of the Torah, and stole from under the wings of the Cloud of Glory souls from the tribe of Dan, and killed them, inasmuch as the image of Micah was in their hands. At that time the House of Israel was doomed; likened as it was to a vineyard about to be destroyed, (it would have perished), had it not been for the righteous ones of that generation, compared to goodly perfume.

v. 16.—*My beloved is mine, and I am his: he who feedeth (his flock) among the roses.*

Thereupon they returned in repentance; and Moses, the prophet, was ready to pray before the



Eternal; Joshua, his servant, having been equipped was despatched from beneath the wings of the cloud of glory of the Eternal: with him heroes of righteousness, resembling the rose by their actions: and these waged war with Amalek, and crushed Amalek and his people by means of the anathema of God, and by death and destruction issuing from the decree of the sword.

v. 17.—*Until the day cooleth, and the shadows flee away, turn, my beloved, and be thou like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether ("division").*

A few days later the Children of Israel made the golden calf, and the cloud of glory which had protected them departed, and they were left exposed, deprived of the knowledge of the use of their arms, on which was inscribed the Great Name (of the Eternal), interpreted as comprising seventy names. God was now about to destroy them from off the earth, when He called to mind the covenant which He had once established with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who were as swift and eager in

their worship as a roe or a young hart, and He remembered the sacrifice which Abraham offered in Isaac, his son, on Mount Moriah. and when on a former occasion he had offered his sacrifice, and divided it equally (*cf.* Genesis xv. 10).

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### CHAPTER III.

v. 1.—*By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not.*

Now when the people of the House of Israel saw that the cloud of glory had departed from them, that the crown of holiness which had been handed to them at Sinai had been taken from them, and that they were left in darkness as the night; and that when they sought the holy crown which had been removed from their midst, they found it not,—

v. 2.—*I will rise now, and go about the city, in the streets and in the broad ways, I will seek him whom my soul loveth; I sought him, but I found him not.*

Then said the Children of Israel one to the other:

Let us rise now, and go about and encompass the appointed tent, which Moses has spread out without the camp, and let us seek instruction from before the Eternal, and seek the Divine Presence which has been removed from us: and they went about the cities, streets, and squares, but found not (what they sought).

v. 3.—*The watchmen that go about the city found me (to whom I said): Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?*

And the Assembly of Israel exclaimed: Moses and Aaron, and the Levites who keep charge of the word of the appointed tent and encompass it round about, met me, and I enquired of them concerning the glorious Presence of the Lord which had departed from me; and Moses, the great Teacher of Israel, replied, and said: I will ascend unto the high Heavens and supplicate the Lord; peradventure He will forgive your guilt, and suffer His Presence to dwell among you as heretofore.

v. 4.—*It was but a little that I passed from them, when I found him whom my soul loveth: I held*

*him, and would not let him go, until I had brought him into my mother's house, and into the chamber of her that conceived me.*

But a little time after, and the Eternal turned from His fierce anger, and bade Moses, the prophet, construct the appointed Tabernacle and the Ark, and He caused His Presence to dwell therein. The House of Israel then offered their sacrifices, and engaged in the study of the Law in the chambers of the House of Learning appointed by Moses, their Teacher, and in the class-rooms of Joshua, the son of Nun, his assistant.

v. 5.—*I adjure you, O daughter of Jerusalem, by the roes, and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awaken the love, until it shall please . . .*

When the seven nations became aware of the fact that the Children of Israel were about to possess themselves of their land, they there and then rose and cut down the trees, and stopped the wells of water, and laid waste their cities, and fled. Then said the Almighty, blessed be He, unto Moses, the prophet: I promised unto the Patriarchs that I

would bring up their descendants to possess the land producing milk and honey; and now, see, I would have to bring their descendants to a land waste and void. I will now detain them forty years in the wilderness, (during which time) My Law will have become part of their very selves, and in the interval those wicked peoples will have built up what they have destroyed. In this sense Moses adjured the Israelites, saying: "I charge you by oath, O Assembly of Israel, before the Lord of Hosts, that ye stir not to go up to the land of the Canaanites until forty years shall have been completed, and it be God's will to deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hands, and ye shall pass over the Jordan, and the land be subdued before you."

v. 6.—*Who is this that cometh up out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, more than all powders of the merchant?*

Now when Israel did come up from the wilderness, and crossed the Jordan with Joshua, the son

of Nun, the peoples of the land exclaimed: What chosen people is this coming up from the wilderness, perfumed with sweet-smelling incense,—supported by the merit of Abraham, who worshipped and prayed before the Lord on Mount Moriah; anointed with the oil used by exalted personages, namely, with the righteousness of Isaac, bound as he was in the place of the Holy Temple, called the Mountain of Frankincense—a people in whose favour miracles have been wrought, through the piety of Jacob, with whom the angel wrestled until morning-dawn, and he prevailed; and he was thus delivered, and (through him) the twelve tribes.

v. 7.—*Behold, it is the couch of Solomon; three-score mighty men are about it, of the mighty men of Israel.*

When Solomon, King of Israel, built the Temple of the Lord in Jerusalem, God exclaimed: How beautiful is this Temple, built by the hands of King Solomon, son of David! And how comely are the priests in the hour when they spread forth their hands, standing on the dais, in the act of pronouncing the blessing upon the people of Israel,

contained in the formula consisting of sixty letters, delivered unto Moses, their Teacher ; by means of which they are strongly protected round about as by a high and strong wall, by virtue of which all the valiant men of Israel are strengthend, and do prosper.

v. 8.—*All of them clasping the sword, expert in war : every man hath his sword upon his thigh, because of fear in the night.*

The priests and the Levites, and the tribes of Israel, all take hold of the words of the Law, compared as it is to a sword, and they discuss it, as valiant men learned in warfare ; and as regards each one of them, the sign of the covenant of Abraham (*Hebrew* : "circumcision") is upon their flesh, and by it they prevail, as a mighty man whose sword is girt upon his thigh, and in consequence thereof they have no fear of dangerous agents, or of the shades that prowl about by night.

v. 9.—*King Solomon made himself a palanquin of the wood of Lebanon.*

King Solomon built himself a holy Temple of

the (wood of the) ginger-tree, box, and cedar, which came from Lebanon, and he overlaid it with pure gold.

v. 10.—*He made the pillars thereof of silver, the support thereof of gold, the seat of it of purple, the midst thereof being inlaid with love, from the daughters of Jerusalem.*

After he had finished the building of it, he placed therein the Ark of the Testimony, which is the Pillar of the world; inside the Ark (he placed) the two tablets of stone, which Moses had hidden therein in Horeb, more precious than silver refined, more beautiful than the best gold; and spread out and covering it from above, was the curtain of blue and purple; and between the Cherubim, upon which was the lid (of the Ark), there dwelt the Divine Presence, whose Name resides in Jerusalem, chosen from all the cities of the land of Israel.

v. 11.—*Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold King Solomon, with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him on the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart.*

When King Solomon came to celebrate the dedi-



cation of the Temple, a herald went forth and proclaimed vociferously ("in the enclosure, termed *Chel*"): Come forth, O ye who dwell in the districts of the land of Israel, and ye people of Zion; come and see the crown and diadem with which the people of the House of Israel have crowned King Solomon on the day of the dedication of the Temple; and rejoice ye, with the joy of the Feast of Tabernacles which King Solomon celebrated at that time, the Feast extending over fourteen days.

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#### CHAPTER IV.

v. 1.—*Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair; thine eyes are as doves behind thy veil: thine hair is as a flock of goats, that appear from Mount Gilead.*

Now on that day King Solomon sacrificed upon the altar a thousand burnt offerings, and his offering was accepted with favour by the Lord; whereupon the Bath-Kol proceeded from Heaven and

said: How comely art thou, O Assembly of Israel, and how comely are those leaders of the Assembly, and those wise men sitting in the Synhedrin, who for ever enlighten the people of Israel, resembling young pigeons; and even the rest of the children of thy Assembly, the people of the land, they are righteous as the sons of Jacob, who gathered stones and made a heap in the mountain of Gilead.

*v. 2. Thy teeth are like a flock (of sheep) that are shorn, which are come up from the washing; all of whom are paired, and none of them bereaved.*

And how comely are the Priests and Levites, who bring thy offerings, and eat of the flesh of the holy (offering), and of the tithe, and the heave-offering, such gifts being pure, free from (the blemish of) compulsion or (the taint of) robbery, just as the flocks of Jacob's sheep were clean and pure at the time when they were shorn, and came up from Jacob's brook; for among them there were none distrained and unlawfully gotten, all were similar one to the other, all bore twins each time, nor did

there exist among them any that were barren, or cast its young.

v. 3.—*Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet, and thy speech is comely; thy temples are like a piece of pomegranate behind thy veil.*

And the lips of the High Priest uttered prayers on the Atonement-Day before the Lord, and his words had the effect of turning away the sins of Israel, which, appearing as the scarlet thread, were changed and became white as pure wool. As for the King at the head of all, he was as full of religious practices as the pomegranate, as well as the Overseers and Chiefs that stood in close relation to the King, who were righteous, and in whom there was no guile whatsoever.

v. 4.—*Thy neck is like the tower of David, builded for an armoury, whereon there hang a thousand bucklers, all the shields of the mighty men.*

As for the Head of the College, thy instructor, full of merit is he, and great in the performance of goodly actions, as was David, King of Israel;

upon that which issued from his lips depended the very structure of the world, for he was occupied with the instruction of the Law: thus confident and successful in war are the people of the House of Israel, as though seizing in their hands all kinds of implements used by mighty men.

v. 5.—*Thy two breasts are like two fawns, that are twins of a roe, which feed among the lilies.*

Thy two deliverers, who in time to come shall deliver thee, Messiah, son of David, and Messiah, son of Ephraim, may be compared to Moses and Aaron, sons of Jochabed, resembling two young roes, or twins of a gazelle; by their merit were the Children of Israel fed for forty years in the wilderness upon manna and rich fowl, and the waters of Miriam's well.

v. 6.—*Until the day cooleth, and the shadows flee away, I will get me to the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense.*

Now all the time that the House of Israel held fast to the methods of their pious forefathers, the agents and shades of danger fled from them, those

demons that roam about at morn or noon-tide ; for the presence of the glory of the Lord was dwelling in the Temple built upon Mount Moriah ; and these destructive and deadly agents would flee at the smell of the perfumed incense.

v. 7.—*Thou art all fair, my love ; and there is no blemish in thee.*

And whilst the Israelites performed the will of the Lord of the Universe, He would praise them in the heavens on high, and say : Thou are all beautiful, O Assembly of Israel, there is no blemish in thee.

v. 8.—*With me from Lebanon, my bride, with me come from Lebanon ; thou shalt look from the top of Amana, from the top of Senir and Hermon, from the lions' dens, from the mountains of the leopards.*

And He continued : With Me shall dwell the Assembly of Israel, likened to the modest maiden ; and with Me shall they ascend unto the Holy House, whither the heads of the people shall bring thee gifts, they that inhabit the river Amana, and

they that dwell on the heights of the mountain of snow, and the peoples that are in Hermon; and tributes shall they bring unto thee who inhabit strong cities, mighty as lions; and offerings from cities (built) upon mountains, stronger even than leopards.

v. 9.—*Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, bride; thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck.*

Fixed upon the tablet of my heart is thy love, O my sister of the House of Israel, compared as thou art to the modest maiden: fixed upon the tablet of my heart is the love of the least among thee, righteous as one of the Chiefs of Synhedrin, and as one of the Kings of the House of Judah, upon whose neck was put the crown of sovereignty.

v. 10.—*How fair is thy love, my sister, bride! How much better is thy love than wine, and the smell of thine ointments than all spices!*

How beautiful unto me is thy affection, O my sister, Assembly of Israel, compared to the modest

bride! How goodly unto me is thy affection, more than that of the seventy nations; and as for the good name of thy righteous ones, it is more fragrant than all perfumes!

v. 11.—*Thy lips, O bride, drop as the honey-comb: honey and milk are under thy tongue; and the smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon.*

And during the hour in which the priests pray in the court of the Temple, their lips distil honey as from the comb, and thy tongue, O modest bride, with thy utterances of song and praise (imparts) sweetness as that of milk and honey, whilst the scent of the priests' garments is as the scent of frankincense.

v. 12.—*A closed garden is my sister, my bride; a closed spring, a fountain sealed.*

As for thy married women, they are as chaste as the modest bride, and like unto the Garden of Eden, upon which no man has permission to enter but those righteous ones whose souls are wafted thither by the hands of angels: as for thy

maidens, they are concealed and hidden in their chamber, and shut up like the spring of living water, which issued from beneath the Tree, and divided itself into four heads; and which had it not been sealed by (the fiat) of the Great and Holy Name, would, in issuing forth, have overflowed and overwhelmed the whole world.

v. 13.—*Thy shoots are an orchard of pomegranates, with precious fruits; henna with spikenard plants.*

Regarding thy young men, rich in (the fulfilment of) precepts, like pomegranates, they are attached in love to their wives, and beget children righteous as themselves, and their odour resembles that of the pleasant spices of the Garden of Eden, camphire (or cypress) with spikenard.

v. 14.—*Spikenard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense; myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices.*

Spikenard and saffron, and sweet-smelling calamus and cinnamon, with all the wood of incense,



pure myrrh and the wood of aloes, with all manner of spices.

v. 15.—*(With) a garden fountain, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon.*

And the waters of Siloah flow gently with the rest of the waters that flow from Lebanon to water the land of Israel, by virtue of those who occupy themselves with the study of the Law, compared to the well of living waters; and by virtue of the oblation of water poured out upon the altar in the Temple, built in Jerusalem, which is called Lebanon.

v. 16.—*Awake, O north wind; and come thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out. Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his precious fruits.*

Upon its northern side there was the Table, upon which were the twelve loaves of shew-bread; upon its south side there was the Candlestick to give light; and upon the altar did the priests offer the sacrifice, and upon it they brought the sweet-smel-

ling incense; the Assembly of Israel exclaiming:  
O that my beloved God might come to the Temple,  
and receive with favour the sacrifices of His  
people!

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## CHAPTER V.

v. 1.—*I am come into my garden, my sister, bride; I have gathered my myrrh with my spice; I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk. Eat, my friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved!*

Then said the Holy One, blessed be He, unto His people of the House of Israel: I have come unto the Temple which Thou hast built unto Me, O my sister, Assembly of Israel, compared to the chaste bride! and I caused My Presence to dwell in your midst; I received with favour thy incense of spices which thou didst prepare for Me; I sent fire from Heaven, and it devoured thy burnt-offerings; and as for thy holy oblations, they were accepted favourably by Me, the oblation of red wine and of white wine, which the priests poured

out upon My altar. Now ye priests, who love My precepts, come and enjoy what is left of the sacrifices, and delight yourselves with the bounties which are ready for you.

v. 2.—*I sleep, but my heart waketh; it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying: Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my perfect one; for my head is filled with dew, my locks with the drops of the night.*

After all these things, the people of the House of Israel committed iniquity, and He delivered them into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, and He led them into captivity; and in captivity they were like unto a man in slumber, who cannot be roused from his sleep. Here the voice of the Holy Spirit enlightened them by means of the prophets, and He would rouse them from the slumber of their hearts. The Lord of the Universe began, and said: Turn in repentance, open thy mouth, pray and praise me, O my sister, my love, Assembly of Israel, resembling the dove in the perfection of thy works, for the hair of my head is

full of thy tears, as a man the hair of whose head is soaked with the dew of Heaven; and the locks of my hair are filled with the drops from my eyes, as a man whose locks of hair are filled with rain-drops that fall in the night.

v. 3.—*I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I soil them?*

Then answered the Assembly of Israel, and said to the prophets: I have in the past removed from me the yoke of His Commandments, and worshipped the idols of the nations; how then can I have the face to return unto Him?

The Sovereign of the Universe replied unto them by the prophets: As for me, I have already removed My Presence from your midst, how then can I return, seeing that you have done evil things? And I have made clean My feet from thy uncleanness, how then can I suffer them to be sullied in your midst through your wicked actions?

v. 4.—*My beloved drew his hand from the hole (of the door), and my heart was moved for him.*

When it was made clear to the Eternal that the

people of the House of Israel were not willing to repent and to return to Him, He stretched forth the stroke of His might upon the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh upon the other side of Jordan, and delivered them into the hand of Sennacherib, King of Assyria, and he caused them to be carried captive unto Lahlah and Habor, rivers of Gozan, and to the cities of Media; and took from their hands the molten calf which wicked Jeroboam set up in Leshem Dan, which is called Pamios, in the days of Pekah, son of Remaliah: and when I heard of these things My bowels were moved for them.

v. 5.—*I rose to open to my beloved; and my hands dropped with myrrh, and my fingers with liquid myrrh, upon the handles of the bolt.*

And as the mighty stroke of the Eternal was heavy upon me, I was astounded at my actions; then the priests brought the sacrifice and offered up sweet-smelling incense; but it was not accepted with favour, for the Lord of the Universe closed the doors of repentance in my face.

v. 6.—*I opened to my beloved; but my beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone. My soul had departed when he spake: I sought him, but I could not find him; I called him, but he answered me not.*

The Assembly of Israel exclaimed: I desired to ask instruction from the Eternal, but He had removed His Presence from me; my soul longed for the voice of His Word, I sought the presence of His glory, but I found it not; I prayed unto Him, but He covered the heavens with clouds and would not receive my prayer.

v. 7.—*The watchmen that go about the city found me; they smote me; they wounded me; the keepers of the walls took away my veil from me.*

The Chaldeans overtook me, they that guard the ways, and they pressed me sore round about the city of Jerusalem; some of my people they slew with the sword, others they took into captivity; they took the royal crown from off the neck of Zedekiah, King of Judah, bringing him into Rivlah, and they put out his eyes, these people from

Babylon, who harassed the city and guarded the walls.

v. 8.—*I adjure you, O daughter of Jerusalem, if ye find my beloved, that ye tell him that I am sick through love.*

The Assembly of Israel replies: I adjure you, O prophets, by the decree of Heaven, should your lover perchance show himself unto you, tell me, for I am sick on account of the love of my friend.

v. 9.—*What is thy beloved more than another beloved, O thou fairest among women? What is thy beloved more than another beloved, that thou dost so adjure us?*

The prophets answered and said unto the House of Israel: Which God dost thou wish to serve, O Assembly of Israel, thou fairest among peoples? Who is the One whom thou desirest to fear, that thou hast thus bound us?

v. 10.—*My beloved is white and ruddy, marked out by a banner among ten thousand.*

Then began the Assembly of Israel to think of

the praise of the Lord of the Universe, and said : That God do I desire to serve who, day by day, is enveloped in a robe white as snow, occupied with the 24 books of the Law, and with the words of the Prophets and Writings, and by night with the six Orders of the Mischna ; and the splendour of whose countenance radiates as fire, on account of the magnitude of the wisdom and the judgment adduced in the task of seizing upon new arguments day by day, such as He will in the future publish unto His people on the Great Day ; while His banner (waves) over myriads of angels who minister before Him.

v. 11.—*His head is as the most fine gold, his locks are heaps of curls, and black as a raven.*

As for His Law, it is more desirable than pure gold ; and as for the interpretation of the Words (of the Law), there are stored up within them heaps of grounds for precepts ; to those who keep them, they are white as snow, and to those who do not observe them, they are like the face of the raven.



v. 12.—*His eyes are like doves beside the water-brooks; washed with milk, and fitly set.*

His eyes are constantly directed towards Jerusalem, to do good unto her and to bless her, from the beginning of the year to the end of the year; like unto doves that stand directing their eyes to the streams of water. (This is done) in return for the merit of those who sit (assembled) in the Synhedrin, engaged in the study of the Law, making justice flow (so that it glide) smoothly like milk, and of those who are seated in the House of Study, being circumspect in judgment, and determining whom to acquit and whom to condemn.

v. 13.—*His cheeks are like a bed of spices, as towers of perfumes: his lips are as lilies, dropping liquid myrrh.*

The two tablets of stone which He gave to His people were written on ten lines, similar to the lines in a garden of spices—their (contents) abounded in subtleties and reasons, like a flower-garden full of perfumes: and as for the lips of his scholars engaged

in the Law, they distil taste on every side, while the word issuing from their mouths is as choice myrrh.

v. 14.—*His hands are as rings of gold set with "Tarshish"; his body is as bright ivory overlaid with sapphires.*

The (names of the) twelve tribes of his servant Jacob were enrolled upon the (breast) plate—the golden ornament of holiness, engraven upon twelve gems, together with (the names of) the three Patriarchs of the world, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Reuben was engraven on ruby,\* Simeon on a cornelian, Levi on earthy corundum, Judah was engraven on a stibium-coloured stone, Issachar on emerald, Zebulun on diamond, Dan on a beryl, Napthali on a sapphire, Gad on topaz, Asher on "Tarshish"-stone, Joseph was engraven on malachite, Benjamin on jasper. They were like the twelve signs of the Zodiac, illumining like a lantern, bright in their effect as ivory ("elephant's tooth"), and shining as glittering jewels ("sapphires").

\* The rendering of the names of the various precious stones is but tentative. It is difficult, perhaps impossible, in spite of all available knowledge on the subject, to determine exactly the names of these gems.

v. 15.—*His legs are as pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold: his countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars.*

As regards the righteous, they are the pillars of the world, resting on supports of fine gold, namely, those Words of the Law in which they are practised, and by means of which they instruct the people of the House of Israel to carry out His Will; whilst, on the other hand, He is filled with compassion towards them as the Ancient One, and changes into the whiteness of snow the guilt of the House of Israel. He, too, who in days to come, will bring about a triumphant war against the nations who transgress His Will, like unto a young and mighty warrior, strong as the cedar.

v. 16.—*His mouth (palate) is most sweet; yea, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem.*

The words of His palate are sweet as honey, and all His Commandments are more desirable to His wise men than gold and silver. This is the praise

of God, my Beloved, and this is the strength of the Lord, my Friend, O ye prophets, preaching in Jerusalem!

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## CHAPTER VI.

v. 1.—*Whither is thy beloved gone, O thou fairest among women? whither hath thy beloved turned him, that we may seek him with thee?*

When the prophets heard the praise of the Eternal from the mouth of the Assembly of Israel, they answered and said: For what sin has the Divine Presence withdrawn from thee, thou, whose conduct has been more beautiful than that of all nations; and whither has thy Beloved turned, at the time that He removed from thy sanctuary? The Assembly of Israel replied: For the sins of rebellion and sedition which were found in me. And the prophets rejoined; Now, then, return in repentance, and let both yourselves and we rise and pray unto Him, and implore mercy together.

v. 2.—*My beloved has gone down into his garden, to the beds of spices, to feed in the gardens, and to gather roses.*

Then the Lord of the Universe received their prayers favourably, and went down into Babylon to the Synhedrin of wise men, and gave release unto His people, and brought them up out of their exile by the hands of Cyrus, Ezra, and Nehemiah, Zerubabel, the son of Shealtiel, and the old men of Judah. And they built the Temple, and appointed the priests over the sacrifice, and the Levites over the charge of the Holy Word; and God sent fire from Heaven, and accepted in favour the sacrifices and the incense of spices. And in like manner as a man feeds his beloved son with delicacies, thus did He indulge them, and as a man who gathers roses on the plain, so did He gather them from Babylon.

v. 3.—*I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine; he who feedeth among the roses.*

And in that day I worshipped my Beloved, the Lord of the Universe, and my Beloved suffered

His holy Presence to dwell in my midst, and feed me with delights.

v. 4.—*Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem, terrible as bannered hosts.*

The Eternal spake: How comely art thou, My love, at the time when thou art desirous of doing My will! Beautiful is the Temple which thou hast built unto Me, as was the first Temple which King Solomon built for Me in Jerusalem. Thy dread, too, is upon all the peoples, as in the day on which thy four regiments marched in the wilderness.

v. 5.—*Turn away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me; thy hair is as a flock of goats that appear from Gilead.*

Thy teachers, the wise men of the Great Assembly, went round about Me, they who consulted Me during exile, and they appointed seats of learning for the instruction of My Law; and the rest of thy scholars and the people of the land approved by the word of their mouths, as the sons of Jacob, who gathered the stones and made them into a heap in the mount of Gilead.

v. 6.—*Thy teeth are like a flock (of sheep) which are come up from the washing; all of whom are paired, and none of them bereaved.*

The Priests and the Levites ate of thy sacrifices, of the tithe, and thy waive-offering—free from all taint of an enforced or stolen gift, as pure as were the flocks of Jacob's sheep, at the time when they came up from the brook of Jaboc, all being similar one to the other, bearing twins on every occasion, and among which there were none who cast their young or who were barren.

v. 7.—*Thy temples are like a piece of a pomegranate behind thy veil.*

And the royal house of the Hasmoneans was all filled with (the performance of) the Commandments as the pomegranate; and as for Mattathias himself, the High Priest, and his sons, they were more righteous than all of them, and with thirsty longing did they carry out the words and precepts of the Law.

v. 8.—*There are threescore queens, and fourscore concubines, and maidens without number.*

Then there arose the Greeks. and gathered together sixty kings from the children of Esau, clothed in mail, riding upon horses, and horsemen, and eighty dukes of the children of Ishmael, riding upon elephants, besides those of other peoples and tongues without number, and they appointed King Alexander as the chief over them, and came to wage war against Jerusalem.

v. 9.—*My dove, my undefiled, is but one; she is the only one of her mother; she is the choice one of her that bare her. Daughters saw her and called her blessed; yea, the queens and the concubines, and they praised her.*

Now at that time the Assembly of Israel, resembling a perfect dove, was serving her Sovereign Lord with one heart, and cleaving to the Law, busy with the practice of its ordinances with a perfect heart, and their merit was clear as on the day of the Exodus from Egypt. On this account, when the



Hasmoneans with Mattathias and all the people of Israel came forth and engaged in battle with them, the Eternal delivered the enemy into their hands; and as the inhabitants of the districts saw this, they blessed them, and the kings of the land and the rulers praised them.

v. 10.—*Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, terrible as bannered hosts?*

The nations exclaimed: How brilliant are the deeds of this people, even as the morning-dawn! Her youths are beautiful as the moon, and her deserts bright as the sun, whilst the dread of her was upon all the inhabitants of the land, at the time when she went forth in the wilderness in four regiments.

v. 11.—*I went down into the garden of nuts to see the green plants of the valley, to see whether the vine budded, and the pomegranates were in flower.*

The Lord of the Universe spake: In the second Temple, built by the hands of Cyrus, I caused My

Presence to dwell, in order to see the goodly actions of My people, to see if perchance the wise men had increased and multiplied, those compared to the vine, and if their scions were full of good deeds like the pomegranates.

v. 12.—*Or ever I was awake, my soul made me as the chariots of Ammi-nadib.*

And when it became manifest to the Lord that they were righteous, and engaged in the study of the Law, the Lord said: I will no longer smite them, nor will I make an end of them, but I shall consider within Myself how I may deal kindly with them, to place them on high in the company of kings, for the sake of the merits of the righteous of the generation, resembling in their actions Abraham, their fore-father.

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## CHAPTER VII.

v. 1.—*Return, return, O Shulammitte; return, that we may look upon thee. What will ye see*

*in the Shulammite? As it were the dance (defilement) of two camps?*

Return unto Me, O Assembly of Israel, return unto Jerusalem, return unto the House of the instruction of the Law, return to receive prophecy from the prophets, who preach in the Name of the Lord! What boots it you, O ye false prophets, to mislead the people of Jerusalem by means of your messages of prophecy, which you speak in rebellion against the Lord, and to defile the camp of Israel and Judah?

v. 2.—*How beautiful are thy feet in sandals, O prince's daughter! the joints of thy thighs are like jewels, the work of the hands of a cunning workman.*

Solomon spake in the spirit of prophecy before the Lord: How beautiful are the feet of Israel as they go up to appear before the Lord three times in the year, in sandals of badger's skin, as they bring their vows and free-will offerings, while their children—that come out of their loins—are comely as the sparkling gems set in the Crown of Holi-

ness, which Bezaleel, the cunning workman of Aaron, the Priest, fashioned.

v. 3.—*Thy navel is like a round goblet, wherein no mingled wine is wanting; thy body is like an heap of wheat set about with roses.*

The Head of thy College (thy Tribunal of the Sanhedrin), through whose meritorious influence the whole world is sustained—like as a foetus is sustained by the navel in its mother's womb—sparkles with (the knowledge of) the Law, as the disc of the moon, when he goes forth to pronounce pure or impure, innocent or guilty; the words of the Law are never wanting from his mouth, just as the waters of the great River, which issued from Eden, never fail: and seventy wise men round about him, "like a round threshing-floor"; their stores are ever filled with the sacred tithe, the vow and the free-will offering, which had been fixed for them by Ezra, the priest, Zerubabel and Joshua, Nehemiah and Mordecai Bilshan, the men of the Great Synagogue, resembling roses; (this was done) in order to enable (the scholars) to occupy them-

selves with the study of the Law by day and by night.

v. 4.—*Thy two breasts are like two fawns, that are twins of a roe.*

Thy two redeemers that shall in time to come redeem thee, Messiah, son of David, and Messiah, son of Ephraim, are like Moses and Aaron, sons of Jochabed, resembling two fawns, twins of a roe.

v. 5.—*Thy neck is like the tower of ivory; thine eyes as the pools in Heshbon, by the gate of Bath-rabbim; thy nose ("face") is like the tower of Lebanon, which looketh towards Damascus.*

As for the Father of the Beth-din, who tries thy law-suits, he has the power with the people to compel them (to comply), and to exact punishment from him pronounced guilty by law, as King Solomon had, who built a tower of ivory, and subdued the people of the House of Israel, and brought them back to the Lord of the Universe. Thy Scribes are filled with wisdom, as channels of water, and they have the knowledge to fix the reckonings of

intercalary months, making leap years, and determining new moons, and the commencement of the year at the gate of the House of the Great Synhedrin. The Chief of the family of the House of Judah is like unto King David, who built the fort of Zion, termed "the tower of Lebanon," so that all who stand upon it may count all the towers which are in Damascus.

v. 6.—*Thine head upon thee is like Carmel, and the hair of thine head like the purple of a king bound in the tresses.*

The King appointed head over thee is as righteous as Elijah the prophet, who showed his zeal for the God of Heaven, and slew the false prophets in Mount Carmel, and restored the people of the House of Israel to the fear of the Lord God. As for the poor among the people, who walk with bowed head, because they are in want, these shall in time to come be clothed in purple, as Daniel in the city of Babylon and Mordecai in Sushan were clothed, through the merit of Abraham, who in days of old ascribed Sovereignty to the Lord of the

Universe, through the piety of Isaac, whom his father bound for the purpose of sacrifice, and through the saintliness of Jacob, who "peeled the rods in the watering-troughs."

v. 7.—*How fair and how pleasant art thou, O love, for delights!*

King Solomon said: How beautiful art thou, O Assembly of Israel, at the time when thou bearest the yoke of my kingdom, at the time when I chasten thee with afflictions for thy misdeeds, and thou receivest them lovingly, they appearing in thy sight as delights.

v. 8.—*This, thy stature, is like to a palm-tree, and thy breasts to clusters (of grapes).*

(How beautiful art thou) at the time when thy priests spread forth their hands in prayer, and pronounce the blessing upon their brethren of the House of Israel—their outspread hands resembling the branches of a palm-tree, and their stature as a date-tree, whilst (the members of) thy congregation stand facing the priests, their countenances bent downwards to earth, as a cluster of grapes.

v. 9.—*I said, I will go up to the palm tree, I will take hold of the branches thereof: now also thy breasts shall be as clusters of the vine, and the smell of thy breath (face) as apples.*

Then said God: Let me go and try Daniel, and see whether he will be able to stand this trial, as Abraham, compared to the palm-branch, stood the ten trials; and I would also prove Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, to see whether they can stand their trials. I will (then) redeem, for their sakes, my people of the House of Israel, compared to clusters of grapes; and the fame of Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah shall be noised about in all the earth, and their odour shall be wafted as the fragrance of the apples of the garden of Eden.

v. 10.—*And thy mouth (palate) as the best wine that goeth down smoothly for my beloved, causing the lips of those that are asleep to speak.*

Said Daniel and his companions: We will take upon ourselves the decree of Heaven, even as Abraham, our father, took it upon himself, he who re-



sembled old wine ; and we shall walk in the paths marked out for us from before, even as the prophets Elijah and Elisha walked, they on whose account the dead, like a slumbering man, rose ; and as Ezekiel, the son of Buzi, the priest (walked), by reason of whose prophecy the sleeping dead were roused, they in the valley of Durah.

v. 11.—*I am my beloved's, and his desire is toward me.*

Jerusalem spake : Whilst I walk in the way of the Lord of the Universe, He suffers His Divine Presence to dwell in my midst, and His longing is towards me ; but when I turn rebelliously from His way He removes His Presence from me, and carries me away among the nations, who rule over me, as a man who rules over his wife.

v. 12.—*Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field ; let us lodge in the villages.*

When the people of the House of Israel sinned, the Eternal carried them away captive to the land of Seir, the field of Edom ; and the Assembly of

Israel exclaimed: We pray unto Thee, Lord of all the world, receive my supplication which I now pray before Thee in the cities of exile, and in the tracts of the countries of the nations.

v. 13.—*Let us get up early to the vineyards, let us see whether the vine has budded, and its blossom be open, and the pomegranates be in flower: then will I give thee my love.*

And the Children of Israel said one to another: Let us rise up early in the morning and go to the Synagogue and to the House of Learning, and search diligently in the Book of the Law, and see whether the time of the salvation of the House of Israel—likened unto the vine—has come, so that they may be redeemed from their captivity. Let us consult the Sages, too, whether the merit of the righteous—filled with (God's) precepts as a pomegranate—is revealed before the Lord, whether the term has been reached for going up to Jerusalem, there to give praise to the God of Heaven, and to bring the burnt-offering and the holy oblation.

v. 14.—*The mandrakes give forth fragrance, and at our doors are all manner of precious (fruits), new and old, which I laid up for thee, O my beloved.*

And when it shall be God's will to redeem His people from captivity, it shall be told unto King Messiah, saying: The term of the exile has been completed, and the merit of the righteous has given forth its fragrance before Me, (sweet) as the smell of balsam, whilst the Sages of the generations have been constant in their attendance at the gates of Learning, engaged in the study of works and in the words of the Law. Come now, rise and receive the Kingdom which I have reserved for thee!

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## CHAPTER VIII.

v. 1.—*O thou that wert as my brother, that sucked the breasts of my mother! When I should find thee without, I would kiss thee; yea, they would not despise me.*

And at the time when King Messiah appears

to the Assembly of Israel, these will say unto Him : Come, be a brother unto us, and let us go up to Jerusalem ; let us, together with you, suck (and taste) of the Law, as a suckling sucks his mother's breast ; for all the time that I was carried about, away from my own land, as long as I called to mind the Name of the Great God, and gave up my very life for the sake of His God-head, even the peoples of the earth did not despise me.

v. 2.—*I would lead thee, and bring thee into my mother's house, who would instruct me ; I would cause thee to drink of spiced wine, of the juice of my pomegranate.*

I will lead thee, O King Messiah, and bring thee up to my Temple ; and thou shalt teach me to fear the Lord, and to walk in His way ; and there we shall partake of a feast on Leviathan, and drink old wine which has been preserved in the grape since the days of Creation, and eat of pomegranate and fruits which have been prepared for the righteous in the Garden of Eden.

v. 3.—*His left hand should be under my head, and his right hand should embrace me.*

The Assembly of Israel (continues): I am the chosen one of all peoples—I who bind the phylacteries on my left hand and upon my head, and fix the Muzuzah to the right side of my door, at the height of a third from the lintel, so that no dangerous agent can have the power and permission to do me harm.

v. 4.—*I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, that ye stir not up, nor awaken the love, until it shall please.*

King Messiah will say: I adjure you, O my people of the House of Israel, why do ye war against the peoples of the earth to leave the exile? And why do ye rebel against the forces of Gog and Magog? Stay here a little longer, until the peoples who have come up to wage war against Jerusalem shall be destroyed; and after that the Lord of the Universe will remember unto you the love of the righteous, and it will be His will to redeem you.

v. 5.—*Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved? Under the apple-tree I awakened thee; there thy mother was in travail with thee, there was she in travail that brought thee forth.*

Solomon the prophet said: When the dead will rise, the Mount of Olives shall be rent asunder, and all Israel's dead will issue from beneath it; and even those righteous ones who have died in exile, will come from under the earth by way of caverns and issue forth from beneath the Mountain of Olives. As regards the wicked who shall have died and been buried in the land of Israel, these shall be cast up as a man throws up a stone with a club. Then shall all the inhabitants of the earth say, and enquire: What was the merit of this people, myriads upon myriads of whom have come up out of the earth, as on the day when they came up out of the wilderness unto the land of Israel, and who delight themselves with the love of their Lord, as on the day when they were seen at the foot of Mount Sinai to receive the Law? At that hour Zion—the mother of Israel—shall bear her

children, and Jerusalem shall receive her captive sons.

v. 6.—*Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm; for love is strong as death, jealousy is cruel as the grave; the coals thereof are coals of fire, a most vehement flame.*

On that day shall the Children of Israel say unto their Lord: We beseech Thee, set us as the seal of a ring upon Thine heart, as the seal of a ring upon Thine arm, so that we shall never again be exiled; for strong as death is the love of Thy God-head, and powerful as Gehinnom is the jealousy which the nations bear against us; and the enmity which they harbour against us is as the coals of the fire of Gehinnom, which the Eternal created on the last day of Creation, wherewith to burn the worshippers of strange worship.

v. 7.—*Many waters cannot quench the love, neither can the floods drown it: if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned.*

The Lord of the World says unto His people

of the House of Israel: Even though all the nations, compared as they are to the waters of the Great Sea, were to gather themselves together, they could not quench the love which I bear you; and even though all the kings of the earth, likened unto the river flowing with a strong (current), were to join together, they could not blot you out of the world. And if a man were to give all the substance of his house in order to acquire wisdom during the captivity, I would restore it unto him in double portion in the world to come, whilst all the spoil which men would take from the camp of Gog would be his also.

v. 8.—*We have a little sister, and she hath no breasts; what shall we do for our sister in the days when she shall be spoken for?*

At that time shall the angels of Heaven say one to the other: We have one people on earth whose merit is clear, but it has no leaders to go forth and wage war with the camp of Gog. What are we to do for (this) our sister in the day when the nations shall speak about going up against her to battle?



v. 9.—*If she be a wall, we will build upon her a turret of silver; and if she be a door, we will enclose her with boards of cedar.*

\* Then shall Michael, Israel's chief, say: If she be as ready as a wall among the nations, (prepared) to give silver for the acquisition of the Unity of God's Name, then shall I and you be with their Teachers, encompassing them as scaffoldings of silver, and the nations shall have no power to rule over her, just as the reptile has no power to rule over silver. And even though she be destitute of precepts, we shall implore on her behalf mercy from Heaven, and the merit of the Law which the young study shall He remember unto her—written as it is upon the tablet of the heart, ready as a cedar to oppose the nations.

v. 10.—*I am a wall, and my breasts like towers: then was I in his eyes as one that found peace.*

The Assembly of Israel says in reply: I am strong as a wall in the performance of the Law's precepts, and my sons are stout as a tower. Then shall the Assembly find favour in the eyes of the

Lord, and all the inhabitants of the earth shall seek her welfare.

v. 11.—*Solomon had a vineyard at Baal-hamon : he let out the vineyard unto keepers ; everyone for the fruit thereof was to bring a thousand pieces of silver.*

A people came up by lot unto the Lord of the Universe, and peace was with her, compared, as she was, to a vineyard. He settled her in Jerusalem, and delivered her into the hands of Kings of the House of David, that they might guard her, just as the gardener takes care of a vineyard. After the death of Solomon, King of Israel, she was left in the hand of Rehoboam, his son ; whereupon Jeroboam, son of Nebat, came and divided the kingdom with him, leading away from him the ten tribes, according to the word uttered by the mouth of Ahijah, of Shiloh, who was a great man.

v. 12.—*My vineyard, which is mine, is before me ; thou, O Solomon, shalt have the thousand, and those that keep the fruit thereof two hundred.*

When Solomon, King of Israel, heard the pro-

phesy of Ahijah of Shiloh, he rushed to kill Jeroboam, but Jeroboam fled from before Solomon and went to Egypt. At that hour it was told unto King Solomon by prophecy that he would rule over the ten tribes all his days, but that after his death Jeroboam, son of Nebat, would rule over them, while Rehoboam, son of Solomon, would rule over the two tribes, Judah and Benjamin.

v. 13.—*Thou that dwellest in the gardens, the companions hearken for thy voice: cause me to hear it.*

Solomon, at the end of his prophecy, remarks: In time to come the Lord of the Universe shall say unto the Assembly of Israel at the end of days: O thou Assembly of Israel, compared to a little garden among the nations, seated in the House of Learning with your associates of the Synhedrin, and the remainder of the people who listen to the voice of the Head of the College, and learn from his mouth the words (of the Law), cause ye me to hear the voice of Thy words at the time when Thou sittest to pronounce (the judgment of)

"not guilty" or "guilty," and I shall approve all that Thou hast done.

v. 14.—*Flee away, my beloved, and be thou like to a roe or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices.*

At that time the Elders of the Assembly of Israel shall say: O my Beloved, Lord of the Universe, flee from this polluted earth, and let Thy Presence dwell in the high heavens; and in times of trouble, when we shall pray unto Thee, be Thou like a hart, which, while it sleeps, has one eye closed and one eye open, or like a young roe, which, in running away, looks back. So look upon us and regard our pain and affliction from the high heavens, until such time when Thou shalt be pleased with us and redeem us, and bring us up to the mountain of Jerusalem, where the priests shall burn before Thee the frankincense of spices.

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# Sepher Ha-tapuah ; (Liber De Pomo.)

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## THE BOOK OF THE APPLE.

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Abraham the Levite, Bar-Chisdai, says : When I reflected upon this book and its contents, composed by the Sages of Greece, I thought that it might be of service in the interests of our Faith to strengthen the hands of the weaklings among our people. By weaklings I mean those who meditate upon the words of the heretics, who aver that, after the dissolution of the body, man has no real existence, and that man lives solely by reason of bodily existence, whereas, at his death, nothing remains. Such adduce, as a proof of their statements, the various existing substances which have a value by means of their combination. Take, for example, the ingredients of ink with which we write : through the combination of the various medicaments, we get a real substance, the result of which is a black liquid of use for writing,

whereas each ingredient taken apart would not serve the purpose. The same may be said of the ingredients of dye-stuffs and other objects. Such heretics apply all their energies to the task of destroying faith: and it is to these that Scripture refers when it says, "And they shall be an abhorring to all flesh" (Isaiah lxvi. 24).

It is for this reason that I have determined to translate this book from Arabic into Hebrew: and I now commence.

When the way of truth was closed against those Sages, and the path of equity hidden from those wise men of intellect and understanding, called in their own language Philosophers, the etymology of which expression is "lovers of wisdom," they all assembled together at one and the same time, and agreed to explain and to cause men to understand which was the right way in which man should walk, so that he might live by it. And they found but one way, and it was this: that man should seek for his neighbour that which he would seek for himself: that he should shun the thing which was blameworthy and ugly, and conquer it: that he

should confess to the truth, exact punishment from himself, and fear his Creator.

Now there was at that time a great and eminent Sage, versed in all wisdom and knowledge, whose name was Aristotle. All the wise men of the time were wont to listen to his wisdom, and to gain instruction from him.

And when he was lying ill of his fatal disease, and his time came near to die, all the wise men assembled together, and went to visit him in his illness. They found him holding an apple in his hand, and this he was smelling: he was very weak in consequence of the force of the malady, and the pains of death made him very restless; they were, therefore, confused and terrified at the sight of him. But when they approached nearer they found him of cheerful countenance, in fact, most joyous and glad, and he greeted them.

Thereupon they addressed him thus:—O our master and lord! when we first caught sight of you, there was no breath left in our body; for we were terrified when we saw the strong hold which the sickness had upon you, and how your strength had

declined . but now that we see you glad and joyous, and your countenance bright, our spirit has returned unto its sheath, after it had left its habitation.

And he laughed at them and said: You think that I am glad and rejoice, because I am being redeemed from great suffering. I know full well that I must die, and that I cannot be saved, for the suffering is very great; and were it not for this apple which I have in my hand, which sustains me by virtue of its goodly scent, and prolongs life a little, I had long passed away: for the animal life which is within me is drawn after the goodly scent. But as for me, I suffer pain, and rejoice alternately, because I belong to a world full of contrasts and change, in which everything created under the sun, being composed of the four elements, is the contrast of something else. One thing is cold, another hot: one thing is dry, another moist. Now how can the body which is composed of the four elements endure or continue in life for more than a short time? One's days can only be continued, one may endure and live only when these contrasting elements are evenly



balanced, so that one does not assert itself above the other. But when one does gain the ascendancy over the other, though but to a limited degree, man becomes weak, sickness and suffering come upon him. Now if there be at hand a skilful physician who can diagnose the disease, and understands which element is low, so that it can be strengthened, and which is too powerful, so that it may be toned down, the body will be restored to its normal condition, and be healed of its sickness.

But how many practitioners are there who neither recognise nor understand this matter, the consequence being that they aggravate the conditions of sickness, and drag down the body to destruction and death.

Now as regards the intellectual faculties, which rule and guide us, and are not composed of the four elements, but of one simple element : of these there is the faculty which understands and recognises the difference between good and evil, and grasps the axiom that things that are equal to the same thing are equal to one another. This is the faculty that understands that 3 is an odd number, and 4 is even.

It recognises its Creator, and understands what He is: it is found in man alone, and in the rest of creation like him.

The second faculty is that of remembering, calling to mind what man has forgotten. The third faculty is that whereby a man may perceive in his mind something which is distant from him at the time: for example, he may be in one town, and yet imagine himself in some other place. It also constructs dreams similar to experiences in various respects, having reference to the future. The fourth faculty is the one concerned with the industrial arts, such as embroidery, spinning, etc.

Were it not that this is no occasion on which to dwell upon these topics, I would have explained each separately, its purpose, and other necessary particulars.

Then one of the Sages whose name was Simo replied, and said: Our lord and teacher! For long hast thou been kind unto us always, and hast taught us much wisdom. Now, we pray thee, increase this debt of gratitude on our part, and strengthen our hearts, as thou hast strengthened thine own heart,

so that we need have no fear of the Day of Death, nor be terrified as other mortals quake and fear at the time of their visitation, for we know not how they go, nor what is their hope. Thou wilt thus be conferring a double favour upon us: in the first place, in the act of strengthening our hearts, thou wilt be giving us instruction; and, secondly, we shall feel that, once the emotions of our heart and our weeping at thy departure have ceased, you will enjoy after death peace and repose.

Aristotle replied as follows:—Lo, I will put you in the way, and teach you so that you shall understand and know the truth of the matter. And if the thing should be troublous to me, I will sniff the scent of this apple to repair my weakness of breath, until I shall have finished my remarks; for I know full well that my reward will be great if you understand this subject: it is, indeed, no light thing for you.

Thereupon all his disciples rose up and kissed him on the head.

He spake unto them, and said: I would, in the first place, ask you one question. Do you believe

and confess the wisdom of Philosophy; that it is the concentration of all the Sciences; that it is Truth, and that the one who prosecutes it searches after what is true and right, and the higher and divine grade of thought; that, by means thereof, man is distinguished from the rest of animal creation?

And they replied: Of a necessity do we acknowledge that this is the case.

Then he said unto them: If it be as you say, the benefit which accrues to man from Science, and the degree of pre-eminence to which he attains through it, must come to him either in this world in which we are placed to-day, or after death, in what is called the future world. And if you say that it is to happen in this world before death, you have not assigned to Science the real pre-eminence which is its due. For many men are froward in their ways; they do not receive instruction, nor recognise their Creator, but spend their days in the good of this world, and their years in the indulgence of desire. And there are others, wiser ones, who have understood, and made up their minds to

receive instruction and wisdom, and have known their Creator ; and yet have not been able to secure for themselves permanent peace and happiness here, (because they hoped to have them yonder).

Now if ye be confused and affrighted by death, which in itself is but the road whereby the soul is led to separate itself from the body which is gross, and to attach itself to the divine standard, to cling to the faculties of scientific truth, which is an ecstatic delight, then I say that you do not ascribe to Science its proper degree, its position and scope, but you suffer yourselves to be steeped, like the members of the brute creation, in a mere animal environment.

I would, furthermore, ask you this question :—

Do you know that death is but another name for the severance of the soul from the body?

And they replied :—Yes, we do know it.

He continued :—You rejoice when you attain some scientific truth and take hold of it ; you grieve when you are unable to gain and learn more wisdom. Is this not so? And they assented.

Then he said unto them :—If this be the case,

do you not observe that it is not the body, of gross material, which sees and hears and understands, but that it does so only by virtue of the soul, which is united to it during the period of its existence? The body, on the other hand, which is attracted towards food and drink and other enjoyments, is the power which prevents the soul from attaining to those degrees of spiritual goodness and right; and the means whereby the soul is liberated from the body, is the means whereby it is liberated from the power which prevents the attainment of its blissful condition. My object is to make it clear to you that man can only attain to a knowledge of precious truths by reason of spirituality, when the soul is pure and perfect, sanctified from its impurities, far removed from that uncleanness which is prohibited, which springs from earthy surroundings, lusting after bodily enjoyment, such as eating, drinking, and pleasuring, like unto the lower animals, which have not the sense to subdue their inclinations and desires.

It is by this pre-eminence that man gains an advantage over his neighbour,—in the hour when he

rules over his spirit and subdues his inclination, and abhors the enjoyments of the body which have a tendency to render him unclean ; but, on the other hand, he loves the pure and spiritual pleasures derived from a study of the knowledge of God, the All-glorious and tremendous, of Him who, in His supreme wisdom, created this His world : he seeks after His ways, and endeavours to understand mysterious things. Then, in such instances, will the eye of the soul be opened ; it will rejoice exceedingly, and indulge a delight to which the pleasures of the body cannot be compared. For bodily pleasures, in very deed, pass away without hope ; they who enjoy them come to an end, their bones perish, and they themselves are brought down to the deepest pit.

As for the pleasures of the soul, they consist in understanding its Creator, in observing the work and wisdom of the heavens, the orbits of the spheres and the wisdom displayed in their movements,—in fact, how everything in Nature is founded upon wisdom. And if a man's scientific knowledge will not reach the attainment of this subject with

its high standard of knowledge, then let him look to himself, and observe the wisdom displayed in the creation of his own frame ; the number of his members which are called into action in the locomotion and movements of his body, when he walks and when he rests ; the remarkable faculties with which the Creator has endowed each member, in order to minister to the wants of the body ; so many, no more nor less. It is then that, by the eye of his soul, he will recognise his Creator, and understand that the wisdom of man during this life is contemptible and poor ; whilst the soul, that longs after and desires to understand these sciences and to teach them, is the perfect one and right : the life of such a one will not pine nor grieve at the prospect of the dissolution of the body, which after all has been the means of hindering the perfect attainment of its longings and requests.

And do you not observe how pure and innocent is the devotee of Philosophy, who acts the martyr by denying himself in this world such enjoyments as eating, drinking, and dressing, whereas the one who is attracted by the minor pleasures of life, in the



very act of eating, *e.g.*, is destroying the body by sickness and disease? Through over-indulgence in the matter of eating and drinking, he increases the "humours" which are generated in the human system, from whence the animal part of man derives its sustenance and strength. First comes the blood, "the fountain of life," warm and fresh. Secondly, there is the black humour, cold and dry. Thirdly, the white humour, which is cold and fresh. Each one of these is naturally affected by the various foods, so that it increases, decreases, and undergoes change. Thus the one who is drawn after the desires of his inclination undermines his body and frame, and ultimately ruins his entire system. The man of wisdom, on the other hand, to whom we referred as one who despises these enjoyments and rejects them altogether, perfecting himself in the work of searching after the knowledge of the Creator, the Being who called things into existence from nought, such a one rather rejoices at the prospect of death—the state in which the soul is disenthralled from the body.

For, indeed, what advantage can he derive from

life, when he has once killed every desire for despicable and low amusements? He has, forsooth, good cause to rejoice, for the hour has arrived when his soul will approach the Creator and feast upon the splendour of His glory: it will have no fear in approaching this Source, nor will there be aught to prevent it, such as is the case in the instance of those lives which have pursued after vanity, and have not resolved to make their paths smooth. Such cannot draw nigh to the Source of glory, for they meet with obstacles and hindrances.

Now, if you are sensible and wise, as you say you are, and you despise all bodily enjoyment as you should do, what cause is there for you to be affrighted and confused (at the thought of death)? If you seize hold of the root, love also the fruit.

Then Simo, the philosopher, answered, and said:

In very deed, O our master, hast thou endeared death unto us, after we were afraid of it.

And one of the disciples, named Milo, spake next, and said:—

Until this have I trembled at the idea of death,

but now I am more concerned and afraid at length of days.

But Crito answered him, and said:—

Why need you fear long life? If you wish to die, and seek death, you may find it, and it will not be withheld from you.

He retorted: This is not the reply that should come from such a wise man as thou art. For, though I am not afraid of death, I do not court it before it comes; there is a benefit to man in life, and that is, that he should aspire to the higher plane, and learn to be wise, and understand the methods of Philosophy, and by this means he will come to know His Creator, the Possessor of all. He will understand that to every effect there is a cause, and that there is a Power which restrains, when things do not come to pass; in the process of time he will, in his wisdom, arrive at the idea of a First Cause, which brings forth something out of nothing, the first of all beginnings, and the Origin of all things: the Universe cannot contain Him, nor can the untutored soul comprehend Him. He hath established in His wisdom seven heavens,

and in each of these there are bright constellations, in which He hath placed a power to rule over this lower world. He hath given to the Zodiac influence on earth, to dispense happiness or wretchedness, death or life, riches, honour or poverty—all this, however, under the power of their Leader and Guide. But the seers who gaze at the stars, and observe their dominion in the world, ascribe to the stars themselves might and dominion, and make gods of them, serving them and worshipping them, thinking that what they accomplish they do of their own accord, and that by their own strength and power they hold sway.

Referring to this subject, the early wiseacres, who made many images, used to endow the constellations with certain forms: they were wont to serve the groves and Baalim, and forgot the Origin and Source of things. Each adopted some particular constellation as it listed him—for example, the sun and moon and the rest; but in their ignorance they noticed not that the influence and course of the stars were constant and regular, that they were unable to change their orbit or alter their

direction. They proceeded by virtue of the power placed within them, finding their will and pleasure in their rising and setting, journeying forth sometimes from East to West, at others from West to East, then resting as desired, no one restraining.

Yea, all the stars together are but as servants appointed for a special purpose, to whom permission is not given to alter and vary, and whose movements and procedure are not dependent upon themselves or their own power ; for it is the upper sphere that restrains them in their course : and this power is resident in the first sphere ; it comes from God, who formed and established these things in His understanding. Thus is it stated in the works of the Philosophers, over which students have pored, in order to grasp these fundamental truths.

Now mankind erred in this respect until there arose Noah, father of the wise men who excelled in the knowledge and understanding of the Creator ; he perceived that all things must have a beginning and a head, that to Him belonged wisdom, a high degree of excellence and might.

After Noah there was born Abraham, the Elder,

who was a greater Sage than the rest, and he learnt and understood that all the men of his generation were lost in the web of their own errors and vanities. It was then that God tried him, and commanded him to offer up to Him his especial son: and he did so, for his heart was perfect with his God; he yearned to understand His attributes, and to grasp the idea that sun, moon and stars had a First Cause that gave them motion. He did not follow in the ways of Terah, his father, who served the image in Haran called *Azai Bern*,\* which is the statue of the Moon-God, to which men brought sacrifices and worshipped, while they caused their sons and daughters to pass through the fire. And it was because Abraham, our father, kept aloof from them and their customs that he was styled the Philosopher; and similarly, he who attains to this degree and understands the science of philosophy in the way that Abraham the Patriarch understood it, such a person is fit to seek death, as I observed.

But as for me, I have until this not reached that

\* Another MS. has *Yoani*, and another *Alazi* (Steinschneider, H.U.D.M., p. 267).

high and excellent degree, and I therefore do not anticipate its arrival. Peradventure, in consequence of my intercourse with you, I may attain that degree of sanctity.

Aristotle answered Crito as follows:—

The reply which Milo has given seems to be excellent, and bears the impress of sound sense and truth. I quite agree with his remarks and commend his wisdom and intelligence.

Thereupon one of the disciples, named Aristoros,\* began to speak. O our Master! said he, increase our obligation to you, and teach us how Philosophic Science has this great quality, that it redeems man from the darkness of ignorance, and the dullness of simplicity, and brings him forth to the brightness of wisdom, to the glare of understanding, and to the light of knowledge and sense.

To this Aristotle answered and said: He who desires to understand Philosophy must improve himself by reading and studying the first eight works which I have composed, until he reaches the

\*According to one MS. the name is *Aristotus*; another reads *Aristotoros*.

Book concerning "the Soul"; from this latter work he will come to understand the constitution of the soul, how it exists in the body, its place, residence, and nature; whether, being bound up together with the body, it is created simultaneously with the body, or whether it precedes it in existence; and if it resides in the body, why it is hidden from the eye of mortal; whether, after its departure from the body, it will rise and live again, or whether it will become annihilated with it. Having understood so much concerning the soul, a man will understand its Creator, and incline towards the path of rectitude in such a manner that he will not depart from it either to the right or to the left. This is the high degree of existence, which has no higher.

Now I have explained to you the way of truth, and I have not held back from enlightening you as regards its exaltedness; for the leaders and teachers of what is true and right neither lie nor speak falsely; they know that the one who despises bodily enjoyment, and instructs his soul in the wisdom of Philosophy, so that he comes to recognise the excellence of the soul, disenthralled



from the body, and yet when he comes face to face with death will be afraid and tremble—such a one has not attained the full degree of wisdom, the limits of Philosophic Science; all those who witness his attitude will laugh at him. But, on the other hand, the man who follows the way of the Sages, afflicting himself and subduing his inclinations, and trusting in his Creator, who contemns evil and chooses the good, not even fearing death, such a one deserves to be called “wise,” for he has learnt to grasp the meaning of the ways of wisdom and the essence of philosophic thought: why should he be annoyed at the idea of the severance of the soul from the body, considering that the advantage of philosophy is to be practical?

It was consequently necessary for the Creator, blessed be He, to bring into existence the man of wisdom and understanding, so as to instruct the boorish, and to enlighten those who have not the sense to understand and know their Creator, nor to attain to the knowledge of anything but what they have learnt from their childhood, whether

it be good or evil. Some may learn the goodly way and grasp it, so that it becomes fixed as a nail in their very souls, they never swerving from it nor changing it. Others, again, may learn it amid a path uncleared and unpaved. Now between such a one, and the one who follows the smooth and even tenour of life, there is a vast difference. As regards the former class to which we have referred, even when they follow in the way of goodness they resemble the dumb animal; and there is in reality no difference between them and the ass or other beast, which man has to pull by the rein and bridle, so as to make it go the straight and proper road. This is just the way of those men who have not the ability to grasp matters of their own accord.

Now there is another class of men whose knowledge and intellect are ready and strong for any speculation (though partaking of the sickness to which the body is heir); and they see things with the eye of their heart. These students of philosophy may be divided into two classes: one holds that the universe never had a beginning, and that

it will have no end ; that there is nothing new under the sun ; that one generation goeth and another cometh, and the world remains for ever ; that there is neither Providence nor Ruler. These, of course, deny the fundamental principles of Life, the existence of God.

The other class of thinkers, the Materialists, hold that the soul is part and parcel of the body, and that while the body is in proper condition, the soul will also be in its proper condition. They adduce proof for this from the case of a small child, who, while young and tender, has not much sense and wisdom, simply because his physique is tender and fresh, and has not yet attained its strength and firmness. If, however, the soul had a different origin, one outside the body, why should the body prevent the soul from understanding his nature and character? while we observe evidences of the very opposite, namely, that when the body is weak and ill, the mind also is weak and ill ; man loses his senses ; he becomes heavy, afflicted with madness and loss of reason.

These people argue from man's material body

with regard to the greatness and wisdom displayed in the works of the Creator.

Now I have endeavoured to explain in detail all these subjects in the books which I have written, and you will find in them a refutation, by scientific methods of reasoning, of the theories advanced by these two classes of thinkers, to which reference has been made.

Thereupon his disciples, sitting at his feet, addressed him and said: O lord and master, tell us what is that superior form of wisdom which a man has to acquire and comprehend, so that he may be fitted thereby to ascend in the scale of excelling knowledge and virtue.

And Aristotle answered: There is nothing among all the Sciences equal to that of Philosophy, for it gives light to the soul, leading it in perfection and integrity in this world, which is the beginning of its existence, and suffering it to take hold of the bliss of the future world—having thus a double issue of life, namely, in two worlds.

In the eight preceding treatises will be found the various scientific methods of knowledge which

a man may adopt and attain to ; how he can verify statements, as to whether they have a firm basis and rest on sound arguments, or whether they lead the other way, far from what is right and proper, and from which the way of truth cannot be ascertained ; as to whether the arguments are but specious, approximate to the truth, and yet not true, and only of service to a person in the attempt to prove his dialectic powers in the science of Philosophy ; to disprove by means of clever and subtle premises the arguments of his fellow-student, and to get the better of him, so that the latter shall not have the strength of argument to reply and refute him. This science is of help and value in the same way as the flesh of the adder is of use as an antidote in extreme cases ; for although it increases the pain, it helps to heal, despite its deadly poisonous character. It is the duty of every philosopher to understand all these argumentative methods, so that he shall not fall by means of his own expressions, or be caught in consequence of his own statements ; and he should understand the points in which he may possibly make a mistake. Now in the treatises

referred to, general principles are laid down, but not their particular application.

I have, further, composed another work, called by me *Metaphysics*, in which I have explained that the heavens and the stars are in their elementary constitution different in nature from that existing in the moon, they being of different elements; we do not possess the faculty of comprehending and understanding this. The same applies to the soul; though the soul of wisdom turns to the body, its constitution does not partake of its character; it is not a compound of other elements; it is simple, pure, and clean.

Happy the soul which has not been sullied by evil deeds, which has discerned its Creator and understood its Origin, and which returns to its habitation cheerfully and joyously after a strenuous life spent in noble deeds, and not after an existence spent in the enjoyment of low material aims!

Alas for the soul which has sinned, which has not the strength to mount and return to its dwelling; for its sordid actions, polluting by the sickly pleasures of the body, restrain it from ascending!

Now it came to pass, when the Philosopher had ceased speaking these words, that his hands grew weak, the apple dropped from his hand, his face changed colour, and he died. His disciples fell upon him and kissed him ; and they lifted up their voices together and wept bitterly, exclaiming : May He who gathers the souls of the "Lovers of Wisdom" gather unto Himself thy spirit, placing thee among His secret treasures, as it beseemeth a perfect and upright man like thee!

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## “These things I remember ;” or, The Story of the Ten Jewish Martyrs.

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FROM A HEBREW MS. IN THE TRANSLATOR'S POSSESSION.

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When, at the time of Creation, God made the trees, they prided themselves on their stature, and raised themselves higher and higher. But when God subsequently created the metal Iron, they humbled themselves and exclaimed: “Woe unto us, for now God has created the instrument wherewith we shall be cut down!” In like manner, after the destruction of the Temple, immodest ones among the Jews exalted themselves, and said: What have we lost by the destruction of the Temple? Behold, we have among us scholars who are able to lead the world by means of the Torah and the Commandments.

Immediately thereupon God put it into the heart of the Roman Emperor to make a study of the



Law of Moses by means of the Sages and Elders of the time. In the course of his study, he came upon the verse of Scripture in Exodus which stated: "And he that stealeth a man and selleth him . . . he shall surely be put to death" (xxi. 16).

He at once gave orders to fill his palace with bolts, and sent for the Ten Sages of Israel. They having come before him, they were accommodated with golden seats, when he addressed them thus: I have to ask you a profound question of law, and answer me but according to law, truth and judgment. They replied unto him: Speak on.

He rejoined: "With regard to one who stealeth a man—of his own brethren of the Children of Israel—and selleth him, or meddles with him and selleth him, what is the law in the case of such a one?" "'He shall surely be put to death,' says the Torah," was their reply.

Then he spake unto them, and said: "If this be so, you ought to pay the death penalty." "Tell us for what reason," they said. "For the selling of Joseph, he having been sold by his brothers," the King explained. "Had they been alive, I should

have passed sentence on them, but as they are not alive, ye shall bear the sins of your fathers."

They then said: "Give us three days' respite; if we find any extenuating circumstances in our favour, so much the better for us; but if not, then deal with us as it listeth thee."

He agreed to this proposal. They left his presence, and besought Rabbi Ishmael, the High Priest, after having pronounced the Great Name, to ascend unto Heaven and enquire whether this was indeed Heaven's decree. R. Ishmael accordingly purified himself by means of ablutions and sanctifications, wrapped himself in the fringed garment of the "Tallith," donned the "Phylacteries," (the "Tephillin"), and uttered the Ineffable Name of God in its distinct pronunciation. He was forthwith carried by the wind, and brought up as far as the sixth firmament. Here the angel Gabriel met him, and said: "Art thou Ishmael, concerning whom day by day thy Creator utters the praise that He has a servant upon earth resembling His own appearance in brilliancy?"

Ishmael replied, "Yea." Gabriel asks him:

"Wherefore hast thou ascended hither?" He answered: "Because a wicked royal decree has determined to destroy from amongst us Ten Sages of Israel, and I have ascended in order to ascertain whether this decree has the sanction of Heaven." Then Gabriel said unto him: "Supposing the decree is not yet fully sealed, canst thou annul it?" He answered, "Indeed I can." Gabriel enquired by what means, and Ishmael answered, "By means of the Name of the Almighty, blessed be He!"

Thereupon Gabriel departed, and ascending exclaimed: "Happy are the children of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, for the Almighty hath revealed unto them (the mystery) which He has not confided to the ministering angels!"

It was said with regard to this R. Ishmael, the High Priest, that he was one of the seven beauties of the world, his face resembling the radiance of the Angel of the Lord of Hosts. (This is accounted for by the following story.) When the greater portion of the life of his father, R. José, had passed, his wife said unto him: "My lord and husband! How is it I see so many people fortunate in their

married life and are blessed with children, while we have not the luck to have a child, no heir, either male or female?" R. José answered: "Who knows but that it may be due to the circumstance that they are more careful in the ritual observance of ablution. Should, for example, any untoward accident happen to them on their way from the performance of this rite, they would return and repeat the same rite; this may be the secret of their good fortune." "If this be the case," she replied, "and if this be the thing that stands in the way, then I solemnly take upon myself to be precise in these matters." It happened thereafter that whenever she proceeded to perform the rite of ablution, and there chanced to meet her on her return an unclean animal, she would turn back and repeat the same act of purification, even as many as eighty times. Then the Almighty addressed Gabriel, and said unto him: "This pious woman is putting herself to too much trouble and pain. Go and appear unto her in the guise of her husband." Gabriel immediately departed, and went and sat in the spot which she had to pass, he appearing unto her in the like-

ness of R. José, and he took hold of her and led her (in safety, free from any untoward occurrence) unto her house.

After this incident, R. Ishmael was born, in appearance like unto Gabriel, beautiful of countenance and fair to look upon; and it was owing to this circumstance, that, when R. Ishmael ascended unto Heaven (to enquire concerning the fate of the Ten Sages), it was the angel Gabriel who attached himself to him.

To return to the subject: Gabriel answered his enquiry as follows. "O my son Ishmael, by thy life I have indeed heard from behind the scene that Ten of Israel's Sages are about to be handed over for slaughter into the power of the wicked King." R. Ishmael asked, "Wherefore?" He replied: "For the selling of Joseph, his brothers having sold him. The Attribute of Justice is lamenting complainingly day by day before the Throne of Glory, and as accuser exclaims: O Lord of the Universe, hast Thou written in Thy Law one single letter which Thou didst intend to abrogate? But what about the tribes which sold Joseph, for which Thou hast

not yet exacted punishment, neither from them, nor from their descendants"?

"It is on this account" (said Gabriel) "that it is decreed against the Ten Sages of Israel that they shall be delivered for slaughter into the hands of the wicked King."

Then R. Ishmael asked: "Has the Almighty not yet been able to find any satisfaction for this act of selling, that he must exact it from us?" Whereupon Gabriel replied: "Indeed, as thou livest, O my son Ishmael, from the day on which the ten tribes sold Joseph, the Almighty hath not found unto this day ten such righteous men to exist in one generation equal to those of the ten tribes, and therefore God now exacts satisfaction from you. But to tell you the truth. When Samael, the wicked one, saw that God wished to seal the decree delivering the ten righteous men into the hands of the tyrannical ruler, he rejoiced with great rejoicing, and he boasted, saying, I have conquered Michael, the Prince. Then the anger of the Lord was kindled against wicked Samael. And God said: "O Samael! Would you be willing to release from slaughter the

Ten Sages of Israel, or will you take upon yourself for all future time the plague of leprosy? One of the two alternatives you must accept." Samael answered: "I will not release from destruction the Ten Righteous Ones; I will accept the decree as Thou hast spoken it." Immediately God's anger waxed wroth against Samael, and almost before he could finish his words, the Almighty summoned the Prince Metatron, the Great Scribe, and said unto him: "Write down and seal the doom for six complete months, plague and leprosy, rising, scab and inflammation, wasting and evil boils, upon wicked Edom, brimstone and fire upon man and beast, upon silver and gold, and all that there is unto them, so that one man shall say unto the other, 'Here, take Rome and all that's in it!' without ado; whilst the other shall reply, 'I do not care for these things, as I cannot enjoy them.'"

As Rabbi Ishmael heard this, his mind immediately became easy, and he walked about in the heavenly sphere hither and thither, when he beheld an altar hard by the Throne of Glory; he addressed Gabriel and asked, "What is this?" And the reply

came: "It is an altar." "And what do you offer thereon daily? Are there then bulls and rams here on high?" said the Rabbi. "No," was the answer; "but the souls of the righteous do we offer day by day upon it." "Who offers them?" "Michael, the great Prince (of Angels)."

Forthwith, R. Ishmael descended and reached the earth, where he told his associates that the decree had in truth been determined upon, inscribed and sealed; and while, on the one hand, they complained that so harsh a decree as this had been arrived at against them, they, on the other hand, rejoiced in the fact that the Almighty had regarded them, by virtue of their piety and saintliness, equal to the ten tribes themselves. Thereafter these scholars sat down in pairs, R. Ishmael, the High Priest, and R. Simeon ben Gamaliel; R. Akiba and R. Tera-dyon; R. Elazar ben Shammua and R. Jeshebab, the Scribe; R. Hanina b. Hachinai and R. Jehuda b. Baba; R. Hutspith, the Expounder, and R. Jehuda b. Dama.

The Emperor entered, all the grandees of Rome following: he began, "Who is to be slain first?" R.



Simeon b. Gamaliel answered: "I am a prince, son of a prince, of the seed of King David, of blessed memory, I would be slain first." But R. Ishmael, High-Priest, also said to him: "I am a High-Priest, son of a High-Priest, of the seed of Aaron, the Priest, I would be slain first, so that I might not look upon the death of my companion." Then said the Emperor: "This one says, I wish to be killed first, and this one says, I wish to be killed first—this being the case, 'twere best to cast lots"; and they did so, and the lot fell upon R. Simeon b. Gamaliel.

So the Emperor commanded that his head be cut off, and they cut off his head; and R. Ishmael then took it and placed it between his knees, crying over it with a bitter heart and exclaiming: "Alas, for the Law! and alas for its reward! The tongue which was in the habit of explaining (the intricacies of) the Law in seventy different ways, how does it now lick the dust!" and he continued to weep and lament over R. Simeon b. Gamaliel. Thereupon the Emperor said to him: "Instead of weeping over your fellow, you had better weep over yourself!"

And R. Ishmael rejoined: "I do bewail myself at the thought that my companion was above me in the knowledge of the Torah and in science generally; and also do I weep because he preceded me in reaching the Throne on High." Whilst he was thus speaking, weeping, lamenting, and bewailing the Emperor's daughter chanced to look out of the window, and she gazed upon the beautiful face of R. Ishmael, the High-Priest. Her tender feelings overcame her on his behalf, and she sent unto her father, asking him to grant her one request and petition. The Emperor sent word back: "O my daughter, whatever thou shalt say will I do, except that touching R. Ishmael and his comrades." She then sent a message unto him saying: "I beg of you to save his life." He replied: "I have once sworn." Then she continued: "If this be so, I beg of you to give orders to strip the skin off his countenance, so that I may gaze upon the surface of his face."

He immediately gave orders to flay the skin from off his face. But as they reached the spot on which he was wont to place the "Tephillin," he cried a

great bitter cry, at which the heaven and earth shook. He cried a second time, and then even the Throne of God's glory trembled; whilst the Ministering Angels spake before God thus:—A pious man such as this, to whom Thou didst show all the hidden treasures of the world, and most of those above and below, shall he die in so sudden a manner? O Lord of the Universe, is this the result of the study of the Law? Is this its reward? God replied: Leave Me; and may his meritorious action stand a later generation in good stead! What am I to do? It has once been decreed before Me, and none can annul it. Thereupon a Bath-Kol went forth, and proclaimed: If I hear one further sound (of complaint), I will reduce the whole world to its former state of confusion and desolation.

When R. Ishmael heard this, he was silent. Then said the Emperor: "All along thou didst not weep nor cry; and now criest thou?" He replied: "Nay, not for my own life do I cry, but on account of the precept of the Tephillin which has gone from me." The Emperor said: "Thou still hast faith in thy God?" "Even though I be put to death,

I will yet hope"—with these words, the breath of R. Ishmael departed.

They next brought forth R. Akiba, son of Joseph—one who investigated the meaning of every tittle connected with the Law, and explaining them, revealed their various occult interpretations, as they were delivered unto Moses at Sinai. While he was being led forth to execution, a message was brought to the Emperor to the effect that the King of Arabia was over-running his kingdom. Hastening to leave, he gave orders that R. Akiba should be kept bound in prison until his return from the war. When he returned, he ordered him to be brought out; they tore his flesh with iron combs, and at every tear which they inflicted upon him, R. Akiba but exclaimed:—"The Eternal is righteous. He is the Rock, His work is perfect, for all His ways are judgments, a God of faithfulness and no iniquity, just and right is He." The Bath-Kol came forth, and proclaimed. "Happy art thou, Akiba, who has ever been just and upright, even as thy last breath of life departed at the words 'just and right!'"

His lifeless body, Elijah, the prophet, of blessed memory, carried on his shoulder, and having borne it a distance of five parasangs, he was met by R. Joshua Ha-garsi, who said unto him, "Art thou not a Priest (prohibited from touching a dead body)?" Elijah replied: "The rule does not apply to the bodies of the pious, they do not cause 'defilement.'"

R. Joshua accordingly accompanied him, until he came to a very beautiful cavern. Having entered, they found there a splendid couch and a lighted lamp. Elijah took him by the head, and R. Joshua by the feet, and they laid him upon that couch; and the ministering angels bewailed him three days and three nights, after which they buried him in that cave; on the morrow, however, Elijah took him, and brought him up to the Seat on High, where all the souls of the pious and sainted ones assembled to listen to his disquisitions.

Next came R. Hananiah ben Teradyon. It was said of him that he never derived any advantage from his fellow-creature, and that it never entered his mind to wish his neighbour any harm. When the Roman Emperor gave orders that he should not

study the Torah, what did R. Hananiah ben Tera-dyon do? He rose in the public thoroughfares and collected groups, and then sitting down in the streets of Rome, he would engage in the study, and teaching, and expounding of the Holy Law. So the Roman Emperor ordered him to be wrapped in these very Scrolls of the Law, and a light to be applied to them, and having had woollen rags fetched and soaked in water, he had them applied to his heart, so that life should not depart rapidly. All the while the Rabbi's daughter was standing by, and exclaiming: "Alas, poor father, that I should see thee in this plight!" And his disciples were present, and they said unto him: "O teacher, what seest thou?" He replied: "I see a burning parchment, and the letters flying heavenward." He then began to weep; upon which his disciples enquired why he wept, and he answered thus: "Had it been that I alone was consigned to the flames, it would not have been so hard for me; but now I am being burnt and the Scroll of the Law with me." The executioner then addressed him, and said: "My master, if I remove from thy heart the woollen rags, so that your life-

breath depart more quickly, will you conduct me to the life in the world to come?" He replied, "Yea." "Swear it unto me," the executioner said, and he swore unto him. Forthwith, as soon as he had taken the oath, the executioner stirred the flame and took away the sponges, and his soul left the Rabbi. Upon this the warder threw himself into the fire and he was burnt. Thereupon a Bath-Kol went forth and proclaimed: "R. Hananiah ben Teradyon and his warder are destined for life in the world to come!"

This is the reason why Rabbi Jehudah Hanasi once gave utterance, amid tears, to the following sentiment: One man, like this hangman, is able to gain the world to come in an instant, another toils all his life-time, and in an instant forfeits all the reward of his past toil, as was the case with Johanan, the High Priest, who served the high-priesthood eighty years, and at the end turned Sadducee.

After him, they led forth R. Jehuda b. Baba. He had never known what it was to have real sleep from his 18th to his 70th year; he slumbered as a

horse does. The day on which they brought him out to execution was the Sabbath eve, some time after mid-day. He implored and entreated them to give him some little respite, so as to enable him to perform one more precept which his God had enjoined upon him. Whereupon they said to him: "You still have faith in your God?" and he answered, "Verily." "Has your God yet strength, the One upon whom you rely?" and he answered: "Great, indeed, is our Lord, and much to be praised, unto His greatness there is no searching." They replied: "If, then, He has the strength, why does He not deliver you and your companions from the grasp of the ruling power?" To which he retorted: "We deserve death at the hands of the Great and Terrible King, and He gives us over into the hands of the (earthly) King, in order to claim at his hands our blood." They came and reported this conversation to the King; and the King sent to him, enquiring: "Is it true what they have told me concerning you, or not?" He answered, "It is true." Then the Emperor remarked: "What impudence thou hast! whilst at the very portal of death, thou art even bare-



faced." R. Jehuda replied: "Woe unto thee, Emperor, thou wicked son of a wicked parent. Did not God look on at the destruction of His own Temple and the slaughter of His saints, and yet He did not rush and seize upon vengeance to avenge His own at their hands?" His disciples then said unto him: "O our Teacher, thou shouldst have humoured him!" At which he replied: "Have ye not learnt that he who flatters the wicked will ultimately fall into his hands?"

He then addressed the Emperor and said: "As thou livest, O Cæsar, give me a little time, so that I may carry out one precept, the name of which is Sabbath, (a foretaste of) the world to come." He replied: "I will listen to you and grant you this your request." The Rabbi immediately began "the Sanctification of the Sabbath-day" at the words "And the heavens and the earth were finished," and he recited them with a cheerfulness and a loud voice which astonished all the bystanders. When he reached the words, "which God created and made," they did not permit him to finish, for the Emperor gave the signal to kill him; and they slew him, his

breath leaving him at the word "God." The Bath-Kol then came forth and said: Happy art thou, R. Jehuda! Thou wast like an angel of God, and your soul departed at the word "God." The tyrant further ordered his body to be dismembered piecemeal, and the parts to be cast to the dogs, so that he received neither burial nor funeral oration.

Then they brought forth R. Jehuda ben Dama. The day happened to be the eve of the Feast of Weeks. R. Jehuda addressed the Emperor and said: "By thy life, give me a little longer time, so that I may fulfil the command of the festival and pronounce the 'Sanctification,' praising the Almighty, blessed be He, for His gift of the Torah." The Emperor asked: "Thou still hast faith in the Torah and in the God who gave it?" He replied: "Yea." The Emperor then said: "What is the merit of (observing) the Torah?" He replied: "David, of blessed memory, has referred to it in the words: 'How great is Thy goodness which Thou hast laid up for those who fear Thee!'" The Emperor said: "There are no fools so great

as you who believe in another world." He answered : "There are no fools like you who deny the living God. Woe unto thee! Alas for thy shame and reproach, when thou shalt see us in the company of God in the light of life (eternal), and thou shalt return to the lowest grade in the infernal region!" The anger of the Emperor was instantly kindled against him, and he ordered him to be tied by the hair of his head to the tail of a horse, and be dragged through every street of Rome. He then gave orders to have him cut to pieces limb by limb.

Then came Elijah, and took up the parts of his body, and buried them in a cave near the river which flows before Rome. And all the Romans during the whole of thirty days heard a wailing voice in that cave, and they came to the Emperor and informed him thereof. And he said: "Even though the whole world were to be reduced to confusion and desolation, I shall not rest until I have gratified my will with regard to those Ten Elders, as I have sworn."

Now there happened to be present one of the wise men of Rome, and he spake to the Emperor

as follows: "O my Lord and Emperor! Understand that thou art acting foolishly in this matter, and making a very great mistake in laying hand so mercilessly upon the people of the Lord: realise that your end will not be better, for it is stated in the Law of the Jews: 'The Eternal is a God of mercy and compassion, long-suffering'; further, that 'He will recompense His enemies to their face to destroy them'" (Deut. vii. 10).

On the Emperor hearing this, he gave orders to strangle him, but the Senator, learning his intention, hastened to immolate himself. And as soon as he was strangled, he could no more be found, and it was not known whither (he had flown). Then the Emperor trembled with a great trembling; nevertheless, his anger was not appeased, but his hand was still stretched out (for slaughter).

And they brought forth R. Hutsphith, the Expounder. It is said concerning this Sage that he was 130 years old when led forth to martyrdom; that he was of fine appearance, and beautiful to look upon, like unto an angel of the Lord of Hosts.

They came and told the Monarch about his

beauty and old age, and begged him by his own life to have pity upon such an old man. Then the Emperor addressed him and said: "How old art thou?" And he answered: "One hundred and thirty years less one day, and I beg thee to give me a respite, so that I might complete my days."

The Emperor asked: "What difference can it make to thee, whether thou diest to-day or to-morrow?" And the reply came: "I should be able to fulfil yet two precepts." "Which precepts do you wish to carry out?" "To recite the 'Shema' at eventide and in the morning—thus ascribing Sovereignty to the Great and tremendous Name, that of the One and Only God." The Emperor replied: "O impudent and bare-faced fellow! How long will ye continue to trust in your God, who has not the might to deliver you from my hand: see, my ancestors laid waste His Temple, and the dead bodies of His servants lay round Jerusalem, and there was no one to bury them, even then; well, surely, your God must be old and powerless to redeem by this time; had He the power, He would indeed have avenged Himself, His people,

and His House, as in days of old He exacted punishment from Pharaoh, and Sisera, and all the Kings of Canaan."

When R. Hutspith heard these words he wept bitterly, and taking hold of his garment, tore it (as a sign of mourning) at the blasphemy and insult levelled at the Name of the Almighty, and he addressed the Emperor thus: "Woe unto thee, O Emperor! What will you do at the latter day when God will visit (for punishment) Rome and your gods?"

The Emperor asked: "How long am I to argue with this fellow?" And he ordered him to be killed, and they stoned and hanged him.

Then his princes and counsellors came and besought the Monarch for permission to bury him, as they took pity on his old age; and the King assented. And his disciples came and buried him, and they mourned for him with a great and heavy lamentation.

The next to suffer was R. Haninah b. Hachinai. That day chanced to be the Sabbath-eve. Now all his life-time, from the age of twelve to ninety-

eight, he used to observe it as a fast-day; so his disciples came and said to him: "Dear Master, will you not partake of a little before your martyrdom?" But his reply was as follows: "All these years I observed it as a fast, I neither ate nor drank anything; and now, when I know not which way I am going, you say unto me, Eat and drink!" He began the "Sanctification" of the Sabbath-day, from the words "And were finished the heavens and the earth" . . . until "And He hallowed it"; and before he was able to finish they despatched him. Thereupon a Bath-Kol was heard: "Happy thou, R. Haninah, for as thou wast holy, thy soul departed in holiness, uttering the word 'hallowed'!"

It was now the turn of R. Jeshebab (the Scribe). It is said that on the very day on which he was led forth to execution he attained the age of ninety. While he was being brought out, his pupils came and enquired of him, saying: "O, our master, what will become of the Torah?"

He answered: "O, my children, the Torah will in time come to be forgotten by Israel, judging from the circumstance that the wicked nation has

arrogated to itself, by means of cunning devices, the presumptuous task of destroying out of our midst the Pearl (of our existence). Would that it were permitted me to serve as an atonement for the whole generation! But as it is, I see that there is not a single thoroughfare in the whole of Rome in which there is not someone slain by the sword, and that this wicked nation will continue to shed innocent blood among the Israelites."

Then his disciples enquired: "O master, what will become of us?" And he answered: "Have a care one for the other, love peace and justice; peradventure, there is yet some hope!"

Then began the Emperor: "Old man, what is your age?" "This very day" (he answered) "I am ninety years old. And before I came forth from my mother's womb, it was determined by the Almighty that I and my companions should be delivered into thy hands, in order that our blood shall be claimed at thy hands."

The King enquired: "Is there then a second world?" And he answered: "Indeed there is; and woe unto thee, and alas for thy shame and reproach,



when the blood of His saints shall be exacted from thy hands! "

The Emperor said: "Be quick and kill this one also, and I shall see the power and might of this God, and what He will to do me in the other world." He gave the command, and they tore him to pieces.

The next to suffer was R. Elazar b. Shammua. It is said that he was one hundred and five years old, and that from his childhood to the end of his days he was never heard to utter a foolish expression, that he never quarrelled with his fellow-men, that he was modest and retiring, and that for eighty years he made a practice of fasting. The day on which he suffered martyrdom was the Day of Atonement. His disciples approached him and asked: "O master, what seest thou?" And he answered: "I see R. Jehuda b. Baba carried on the bier, and close to him the bier on which lies R. Akiba b. Joseph, and I behold them debating concerning the Halacha." Then they enquired of him: "And who decides the point?" His reply was, "R. Ishmael, the High Priest." Then they enquired: "Who

was the victor?" And he answered: "R. Akiba, for he had laboured in the Torah with all his might."

He continued: "O my children! I further behold the soul of every pious one purifying itself in the waters of Siloah, in order to enter this day in purity upon the Seat on High, to listen to the disquisitions of R. Akiba, son of Joseph, who will discourse to them on the subject of this Great Day; in preparation for every righteous being, the angel will bring a golden chair, whereon he shall sit in purity . . ." The Emperor commanded his execution . . . and the Bath-Kol went forth, proclaiming, "O Rabbi Elazar ben Shammua, thou wast pure thyself, and thy soul departed in purity!"

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## APPENDIX.



I have to thank my brother, Prof. ISRAEL GOLLANCZ, for his permission to reprint and incorporate in this volume the following Poem and Note which appeared in the issue, dated July 19th, 1901, of the *Jewish Chronicle*—in which paper also, my 'Story of the Ten Jewish Martyrs' was first published.



# קִינָה

## The Ten Martyrs.

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### A MEDIEVAL HEBREW ELEGY FOR THE NINTH OF AB.

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PARAPHRASED BY ISRAEL GOLLANCZ.

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[Jehoseph Ezovi, the author of the original Hebrew of the poem, lived in Perpignan *c.* 1270. His authorship is attested by the conventional device of acrostic letters at the beginning of each stanza. The paraphrase is based on a MS. in the possession of my brother, Dr. Hermann Gollancz. It would appear that, so far, the poem has only once been printed, badly and imperfectly, from a poor recension; and it is hoped that before long the text according to the present MS. will be published. Meanwhile the following stanza will serve as an indication of the metrical system of the Hebrew, and illustrate the method followed in the present attempt to render the poem into English verse. It will be seen that

the four lines rhyme together, and that each line has a clearly defined break in the middle, while the last line, generally a short one, is a biblical quotation: hence the seven-line stanza in the English, with four main rhymes and three sub-rhymes:—

ועת הוציאווהו להשרף	עם עמקי שפה
ספר הניה בחיקו	בגפש מרה וועפה
נשרף הוא ותהי	גם עמו שרופה
אמרת ה'	צרופה

Unfortunately there are only nine Martyrs commemorated in this manuscript version, and it should be noted that Stanzas xxv. and xxvi. are entirely conjectural, due to my desire to fill the gap; the lines are based on a Midrash. It need hardly be pointed out that a considerable number of medieval poems deal with the story of these martyrs—the names and details varying: perhaps the best known of these is the dirge, beginning “The Cedars of Lebanon,” chanted on the Ninth of Ab.

I desire dutifully to associate this Dirge with the revered memory of my father, the late Rev. S. M. Gollancz.]

I. G.



## I.

When I call to mind the days of old,  
The embers of sorrow are fann'd into flame  
For the martyr'd Ten, who proved so bold,  
Slaughter'd like sheep by the sons of shame.  
As the jackal I wail their woes untold,  
I mourn, as the bird of dolorous fame,  
The Ten Mighty Martyrs of glorious name.

## II.

The godless sought in the Book of God's Law  
Judgment and doom for each misdeed;  
"He that selleth a man"—God's sentence they saw;  
They plotted base mischief: their Cæsar agreed.  
He summoned the Ten:—"Have God's judgments a flaw?  
Exact ye each doom as His statutes decreed?"  
Ah, the Law of Life to death may lead!

## III.

As a serpent biteth, so biteth he,  
As the lurking adder that mortals shun,  
So Cæsar, concealing his deadly glee,  
Hasten'd to gloat o'er his victims undone.  
"Sirs," said he, subtly, "tell this unto me:—  
'He that selleth a man,' the words so run—  
What is the judgment on such a one?"

## IV.

They, righteous, unheedful of treachery's dart,  
Held fast by His law that cannot lie;  
Occasion cruel against them took part;  
Unwarn'd were God's sons by a voice from on high.  
They guess'd not the evil design in his heart;  
As the self-doomed king made they quick reply—  
"By the living God, such should surely die!"

## V.

"Your Fathers their Brother contrived to sell;"  
The iniquitous tyrant exultantly spake:  
"Was the penalty paid? Ye know it full well;  
Upon your own heads their guilt must ye take.  
Were they 'fore me this day, to them would I tell,  
That the doom of their law I dare not forsake;  
The heritage yours from the sale they did make."

## VI.

Fear melted their hearts in their hapless plight;  
This said they—other word utter'd they ne'er:—  
"Grant three days' respite, thou man of ill might;  
Him who dwelleth above would we seek in prayer."  
The Man of Blood yielded, in very despite;  
Three days would Belial his poor victims spare;  
Three days in hard durance he held them there.

## VII.

Ill fared the brave Ten, in dungeon low down—  
The Lord of Hosts' Captains—nought made them to  
rue.  
At their head Rabbi Simon, Israel's Crown,  
And Ishmaël, Chief of the Priestly Few,  
Sons anointed of Yitzhar, of noble renown,  
Cherished by thousands, so faithful and true:  
Of His chosen folk God had chosen these two.

## VIII.

Flesh fell from their bones in that living tomb  
(The stoutest hearts must such terrors appall);  
They turn'd to their Priest, amid the dire gloom;  
When he made oblation, Heav'n answer'd the call.  
He hallow'd himself; he would learn God's doom;  
His spirit up-soared to the High Judge of all:—  
“Lord, is it from Thee this thing should befall?”

## IX.

The angel-hosts heard him, and made loud lament;  
Their Hallel was changed to a doleful moan;  
By angels the answering message was sent:—  
“It is God's decree. Let His fiat be known!  
As we gazed in wonder, we heard His intent,  
From behind the Veil, from the Hidden Throne:  
Beyond mortal wit, yet from God alone.”

## X.

"Woe," cried they all—Heaven's message he brought—  
    "For our forefathers' guilt endure we the rack;  
On us must now fall the sin we ne'er wrought;  
    For trespass of yore we are taken, alack!  
Unheeding, we gave them the answer they sought;  
    We have stumbled, unknowing, in pathless track;  
    Our forefathers sinn'd, 'tis we must pay back."

## XI.

They were brought before Cæsar, and Simon arose,  
    Rabbi Simon the Good, who held himself least;  
"Slay ye me first," he entreated his foes,  
    "Ere by Ishmael's death our hand be decreas't—  
Me first, ere befalls the direst of woes,  
    When Israel's Light shall have utterly ceas't,  
    And torture toucheth our Blessed High Priest."

## XII.

"Nay," murmur'd the Priest, and besought in like strain—  
    So vied they for death, brave men ill bestead—  
"Heaven spare me but this, to behold him slain,  
    Israel's loved Prince, our people's Head!"  
"Cast lots," cried Cæsar, "betwixt the twain."  
    Ishmael, God's servant, to Simon then said:—  
    "Come, brother, let both to the lot be led."

## XIII.

The twain there awaited whatso might betide,  
As the lots, 'twixt the Prince and the Priest, they  
shook.  
On Simon it fell; he first should be tried;  
He, the first, should be marred with murderous hook.  
Cæsar, foul serpent, among them did glide,  
As venomous adder that killeth with look;  
Simon, the Good, from their midst he took.

## XIV.

Israël's Prince to vile slaughter they brought;  
His fleckless soul unto Heaven was borne;  
The Priest, Ben Elisha, with grief distraught,  
Cried "Father, my Father! From the Ephod is torn  
The Jewel engraven as thou hast us taught:  
Thy Priest is sore-stricken, Thy Temple forlorn."  
At length said he,—“Peace! no longer mourn.”

## XV.

Cæsar's daughter beheld him; with passion inflamed,  
Spake she thus to her father, “Thine ear now incline;  
Spare me, sire, yon Priest, Rabbi Ishmaël named,  
Strike not the Lord's Priest in this anger of thine.  
Hear thou my prayer! Let me not be shamed,  
If thou lovest thy daughter, dear father mine,  
Let Ishmaël live; stay now thy design.”

## XVI.

But the tyrant stood firm, his purpose so base ;  
E'en his daughter avail'd not to temper his might.  
Then wildly she raved, "Mine the skin of his face !  
Give me mine !" as they flayed him with cruellest  
spite.  
'Twas the outward gleam, not his inward grace :  
Madden'd she gazed on the wondrous sight,  
For lo ! his face shone with a marvellous light !

## XVII.

He utter'd one cry, as his strength grew faint ;  
To the ends of the earth pierced that bitterest cry :  
"He judgeth aright both the sinner and saint,"  
Quired the angels, the children of God, from on high ;  
"Earth and Heaven would quail at another such plaint ;  
Endure, thou brave soul, with never a sigh !"  
"Let his agony cease," pray'd his brethren a-nigh.

## XVIII.

Then Rabhi Akiba harshly they plied ;  
The heart quakes at his pangs, and the tongue it is  
still ;  
His flesh they scraped, and the dust was dyed  
With his holy blood, as they work'd their will.  
How scourged they Akiba, the sages' pride !  
How passed he hence from this world of ill,  
This world where holiest blood men spill !

## XIX.

Chaninah ben Tradyon next was their prey :

All Israël's tears could not quench the glare

Of the faggots they fired on that festal day ;

With water-drenched wool made they fiercer the flare.  
"Come, death," wail'd his comrades, "why dost thou  
delay ?

Our Father in Heaven, hear Thou our prayer !

Fire and water for Thee we dare."

## XX.

"Bring him forth, let him burn, with his Love in his  
arms ! "

Unclean lips clamour'd, a ribald horde :

"Give him his Love with her wondrous charms ! "

And they bound to his bosom the Book he adored.

"See, he staggers ! her peril his soul alarms ! "

'Mid their gibes he sigh'd, as the faggots roar'd,

"Tried by fire is the Word of the Lord."

## XXI.

The world grew dark in that bitterest hour

When Cæsar decreed, "This day Death wields  
His sceptre through me ! Let him hold in dread power  
Akiba's disciple whom sorcery shields.

Brew him venom of asps—good wine, tho' sour—

Sodom's own wine, from Gomorrah's fields—

E'en the wise Eleazar to such vintage yields."

## XXII.

The tears were scarce dried from off Israël's cheeks,  
When weeping and wailing were heard yet again :—  
"Ah, where is the Scribe! Ah, what vengeance he wreaks  
On Jeshabab! The glory of Scribes is now slain.  
Who now will eternize what Chutzpith speaks!  
Where is he who weigh'd both the mountain and  
plain!  
Ah, the pen of the Scribe is in vain—in vain!"

## XXIII.

"Stint your tears," cried one, "lo, bale follows bale!  
Martyrdom's crown yet another must wear.  
Bow low your heads, as the bulrush frail!  
Be dumb, harass'd hearts, o'ergone with grim care!  
Vain is speech!—Great Chutzpith himself they hale,  
Who expounded the word from Meturguman's chair:  
His Holy Arm hath the Lord now laid bare."

## XXIV.

"Judah hath sinn'd, and Judah shall fall"—  
Was not this the Word the Prophet once spake?  
Foresaw he how Judah, the wisest of all—  
Judah ben Dama—for Holiness' sake,  
Should pour forth his blood? That day Death's thrall  
Was Learning's own self. Ah, Judah awake!  
God's Holiest Mount will ye still forsake?



## XXV.

The twilight darken'd, and Sabbath Eve  
Shed its peace o'er Chaninah, hoary, dim-eyed,  
Four-score and ten. "Let me, sirs, but receive  
With joyous blessing the Sabbath—the Bride,  
E'en now," he craved, "ere your toils I leave  
For the Sabbath of Sabbaths, the Lord beside.  
'Tis sunset—longer I would not abide."

## XXVI.

And he spake from the Song of Creation's Days,  
Bending as vassal before the Throne:—  
"Thus He ended His work, 'mid Creation's praise;  
The Heavens and Earth He had wrought alone;  
And the seventh He hallow'd"—with that did they raise  
Their weapons of death—and he ceased without moan;  
As he breathed forth "hallow'd," his soul had flown.

## XXVII.

For these I weep, and my heart it is sad,  
These thrice-three Martyrs of deathless name:  
Yet grief thereto a tenth must add,  
Equal in sorrow, nor less in fame—  
Rabbi Ben Baba. His soul was glad,  
When death crown'd with glory the life without  
blame;  
From the dark North drear destruction came.

## XXVIII.

Here endeth my dirge. Israël's glory and pride  
Are these martyr'd Sages—the Ten Wise Men,  
O'erwhelm'd by Iniquity's on-rushing tide,  
As its noisome waters swept fastness and glen.  
Their merit be ours when we are tried!  
Lord! May Thy erring folk hear then,—  
“I will not destroy, for the sake of the Ten!”

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# On Games of Chance.

BY LEO DE MODENA.

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## CHAPTER I.

*In which is shown how two loving friends, named Eldad and Medad, came to converse concerning gambling.*

A pure and disinterested affection, such as the love which existed between David and Jonathan, grew up between two young men advanced in knowledge and well-versed in the sciences, who were fellow-students in every sense of the word, ever enjoying each other's company and never separated. The name of one was Eldad, and the name of the other Medad.

Now Medad for a time continued to apply himself to the demands of the business which his father, who was a great merchant, imposed upon him ; but soon foolish and light-hearted men inclined his

heart unto vain pursuits, and he consented to follow them in untried ways. He began to gamble with cards and dice uninterruptedly both by day and by night, placing his trust in these things, so that he gradually became quite a different man, spurning every good quality, and neglecting his studies and occupations. He found his delight no longer in wisdom, but in the pursuit of sporting. On all sides he was the object of shame and derision, and all who saw him mocked at him.

Now when Eldad heard this evil thing, he mourned for his friend, for he loved him as dearly as himself: many a time he would reprove him, until at length he besought him to turn from his evil ways.

Nevertheless, Medad, as a man who heareth not, neither moved nor stirred from his course, but continued in his bad habits, until after length of days Eldad, happening to take a walk beyond the city in the cool of the day, chanced to meet his friend Medad with fallen countenance engaged in deep thought, and Eldad said within himself: This time will I send my reproofs straight into his

heart ; peradventure he will listen and gain understanding on this point. So he began to converse with him concerning this matter as aforetimes.

But Medad answered him in a manner contrary to his expectation, for he began to praise and glorify gambling, and those who devoted themselves to it. And Eldad was much astonished, and he replied unto him. Thus they gave expression to their ideas, each in his own way, in the following conversation which ensued :—

ELDAD.

Whence comest thou, and whither goest thou, my friend Medad? Thou alone here in the field beyond the city! And why do I see thy face so sad? Nay, before thou answerest me, I know full well that thou comest from the gambling den, and that in consequence of the money which has gone from thy purse, and been emptied out of thy pockets, thou art cast down, dejected, and grieved, and thou hast lost heart.

Hast thou not yet made up thy mind to forsake the evil way of sport, and to apply thyself to the

study of the Law, and to commercial pursuits, as thou wast wont to do of old? Hast thou not yet learnt by experience that the words which I have spoken to thee these hundred times are words of truth, that such action is evil and bitter, that it is a net and a snare crippling our success in life, proving thorns and thistles to our very souls, and the immediate cause of numberless transgressions? And since from thy youth until now I have known thee to be possessed of wisdom and understanding, it is wondrous strange to me that thou shouldst turn aside thine ears at the voice of those who seek thy welfare and thy good, as I do this day, who speak to thee in all kindness, in order that it may be well with thee in thy latter years.

MEDAD.

I am weary of bearing it: I am annoyed at having to listen to such idle words as these day by day! They press upon me as a heavy burden, especially when they come from thee, who art so far ahead of me in wisdom and knowledge. But I will not reply to thee as one who hates reproof,

for I am well aware of thy love towards me. Yet I cannot help saying that thou speakest as one who moves among the common folk, who have agreed to despise and abhor this kind of sport, to such an extent indeed, that parents pray to God not that their children may not grow up murderers, whoremongers, or drunkards, but that they may not grow up as gamblers.

I am but grieved on thy account, that thou shouldst be blind to the fact that not alone do they speak falsely who exaggerate this practice into an evil, but that it is accounted by Heaven as a positive good, and as a benefit unto mankind.

I just had three gold pieces, and lost them after they had brought me in a return of fifty ; and these, too, have gone, and still I'm not vexed about it. And had I not delayed in returning to the city, for fear of my father being in search of me, and if I only had the leisure, I would soon acquaint thee with arguments in defence of my conduct and in favour of gaming, and I should no longer appear in thy sight as a deceiver, when thou shouldst hear it said concerning me that I am a sporting-man.

ELDAD.

Lo, it is yet high day, neither is it time to go home yet : besides I have just seen thy father, standing by the sailors, engaged in sending off consignments of stuff by the ship which sails to Eastern countries, and the sun will have gone down before he returns. Do not, therefore, be in a hurry to go, for thy father will not think of thee, and deny me not the favour of acquainting me with thy reply in defence ; for I cannot understand where-withal a man shall cleanse a way of life so wicked as this.

MEDAD.

Since my father's concerns do not stand in the way, and you are desirous of knowing my views, let us select a spot here, under the vine or fig tree, and sit down in the cool of the day. I will then instruct and enlighten you as to how nearly the occupation of gaming approaches the path of rectitude, arising as the sun of righteousness with healing on the wings of the flying wheel.

ELDAD.

Then open thou thy mouth, and let thy words enlighten us.



## CHAPTER II.

*Being a dialogue between them on the subjects of sport and commerce: Medad exerting himself to demonstrate that gaming is a delightful pursuit, one form of commercial dealing, while Eldad holds a contrary opinion, and replies accordingly.*

## MEDAD.

I said of sport, it is praiseworthy, laudable, and glorious: it exists among mankind like every other well-defined and regulated mode of traffic which is usually found to exist among them. There are a number of vanities in the world, 'tis true: but this is least objectionable, inasmuch as it is a polished mirror, in which is seen and found everything that is desirable to look upon for a man that is cast into a dead sleep, and whom both chariot and horse drag hither and thither, until the fury of this fleeting world, bearing so many ills during its brief span, shall have passed away. Nay, it acts as a goad and an instructor, spurring him on, and teaching him that it may be well with him all the days of his life.

I will not deny that he is a better man whose delight is in the Law of the Lord, and who performeth the will and commands of the Creator of all, and turneth not to excitement and vain matters; but this I do say, that among all the other avocations of mankind whereby human beings labour to possess themselves of wealth and earthly goods, or to make a profit by means of them in a round of travail and vexation, this is no less correct and righteous a method in the sight of a man who follows that which is altogether just.

Attend and hearken: "The Lord by wisdom founded the earth" and established His world in love: nay, with an exceeding great love did He compassionate His creatures, when "He pondered, and sought out, and set in order" all their wants, and "continues to look forth from the place of His habitation."

For if there existed but one form of industry among all men the earth and its inhabitants would be subject to destruction; and therefore God has commanded that men should be engaged in diverse occupations, one following the art of the apothecary,

cary, another plying the trade of a tanner: the tailor employing his needle, the scribe his pen: others again being keepers of cattle and shepherds: in order that one should be of help to the other, each in his respective sphere; the result being that every man has the desire of his soul gratified according to a pre-arranged and well-ordered plan.

If, for example, all men were engaged in weaving linen and woollen garments as a covering for the human body, and there were no men to till the ground; or if everyone ploughed the ground by means of oxen, what would become of the paymaster, the scribe, the builder of houses and the house-breaker; the medical man, the travelling merchant, or the shopkeeper; kings, and princes; and such as provide other necessary requirements indispensable to life under the sun?

It is in this connection that our Sages have remarked: How much labour must Adam have endured before he was able to obtain bread to eat! He had to plough and sow and reap, and only after all this was he able to eat. And what did he have to endure before he had a garment to put

on! He had to shear and comb and bleach, and then he was able to clothe himself. But as for me, I rise in the morning and find everything ready prepared for me!

Our Sages wished to intimate by these words, that as Adam was alone, and had no assistance in his days, he had to obtain the bread he ate by the sweat of his brow, and only by the labour of his hands was he able to obtain the garment with which he covered himself; whereas to-day, all these things may be found without trouble to the individual. And for this reason. Because it was decreed by the Creator that one man should be dependent upon the other for his livelihood, whether it be through manual labour and wages, whether through silver-money in buying and selling, through trading, sale and exchange, through profit and the getting of money from his fellow-creature. For by means of commercial enterprise men become smart: in very deed, the Hebrew word for merchandise, namely סחורה (*Sehora*), is derived from a root סחר which means "to go round," denoting that the money circulates, and the coin is current,

going round and round, passing from hand to hand, in the course of payment for goods received, or exchanged.

And now I ask, why should gambling be worse than any of the other pursuits and enterprises in which men engage daily in order to obtain money and to gather gold, which also have their fluctuations, at one time lifting up, at another time dragging down a man; why should we not make it a means of "hunting our venison," and adding to our stores, or, on the other hand, of exerting ourselves in fruitless efforts, if it be so willed by Providence? What disgrace attaches to this latter pursuit any more than to the former?

Was not this the very advice, the sound and splendid reply, which our Lord and King of Jesse's stem, David, of blessed memory, gave to the wise men of Israel (as narrated in the Talmud, Treatise *Berachoth*) in reply to their inquiry, how the people of Israel were to obtain their sustenance, and maintain themselves. He simply said to them: Let them go and support themselves at each other's hands!

For he understood that it had been so ordered

from on High, that the earth, once planted, could only rest on a solid foundation and be perpetuated by means of the currency of money in people's hands in one way or the other, provided always that the way of the wicked be excluded, and that false dealing, theft, and over-reaching be not tolerated.

And what better application could his words have, "Let them go and support themselves one from the other," than that with regard to the law of sport, removed, of course, from wicked and cheating methods? It is not, indeed, by unduly persuading another, robbing and deceiving him, that one man lives on the other; it is rather that his lot is determined by that which proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord: it is a matter resting with God, allowing it to fall as He pleases; and that this is the will of the Maker of All we can infer from His own ordinance in connection with the service on the Holy Day of Kippur, that "one lot shall be for the Lord."

By the same method, He willed and ordained that the land which He gave as a possession to

the congregation of Jacob should be divided, as it is stated, "Only by lot shall the land be divided" (Numb. xxvi. 55); and in the same terms did David appeal to God, when he said: "The Lord is the portion of my inheritance and my cup, Thou supportest my lot" (Psalm xvi. 5); whilst his wise son confirms his view in saying: "The lot causeth contentions to cease" (Prov. xviii. 18).

Hence sporting-men traffic in the land in the same way as all other men of commerce; nay, more, they have even this preference, that all their actions are pre-determined from Heaven above.

#### ELDAD.

Let not such expressions fall from thy mouth, and speak no more. How can it enter thy mind to compare sport to commerce, and to institute a comparison between something which is indispensable to the perpetuation of the human species (as you have presumed to do) and that which bears the taint, and is the cause of indolence and silliness.

For you must remember that in business the purchaser makes a profit, and the seller incurs no loss;

both of them are happy, "they do each other neither harm nor injury": but in sport, on the other hand, one rejoices and is glad, he is all restful and peaceful, whilst his companion is seized with misfortune; he has neither rest nor quiet, and he goes on playing, not with pleasure, but chafing under his losses. Do you think this can be good and pleasing in the sight of God, that one person can only aggrandise himself by the shame of his fellow, that the former can only ascend the rungs of the ladder of fortune by dragging the latter down to earth, and that one man may rise only that another may fall?

Can that be called one of the world's pursuits which breeds enmity and feud in the hearts of men, and is hostile to the solidarity of mankind?

MEDAD.

"Stay, and I will teach thee!" "If a man sell unto his neighbour, or purchase from his hand," say, one hundred measures of produce, with the idea that when the time comes he will make a double profit on the transaction, and that his granaries will be filled with corn; his face is now



turned to the skies to see whether there is a rain-cloud ; he would be delighted to see a big famine in the land ; he would be gratified if he saw the whole world in trouble, provided he alone were easy and comfortable. Or take this case. Your winepresses burst forth with new wine, with wine that rejoices your heart ; and you see hail and lightning-fire destroying and burning up others' vines, so that no fruit or grape remains ; and vinegar becomes so dear that it is sold at the price of wine ; and you are happy because you are growing rich yourself, and your descendants will reap the benefit. Now, I ask you, do you consider such attitudes right and just, beneficial to both sides, when the gratification of one man's wishes means the destruction of all Nature, by means of which he becomes great and exalted, and attains to a position from which he is not dislodged ? And who does not know that all should tend to one end, namely, that one man should help the other ; for it is only by such and similar means that the world can exist.

ELDAD.

"It is bad ! it is bad ! will such a gainer of the

world's goods exclaim; and when he is gone his way, then he will not boast" of the proceeds of this sport, when once he will be made to realise that the cup (of misfortune) passes also over the head of the one who makes a profit, that his gains will not remain his for all time, for the money will return whither it once came, and he will never experience any blessing attaching to it. As the withering grass and the fading flower will his possessions be; and like owner, like possessions, all will be swept away; and dearth in place of satisfaction will remain to him, for not one out of a thousand prospers through such a pursuit. Our eyes witness daily how many victims it has laid low and brought within the bands of the suffering, bound as it is to do harm and to involve men in greatest danger.

And why do you labour so heroically to praise up what is evil, and to decry commercial pursuits, which give us such things as "wool, flax and drink," without bringing about in the acquisition of them, as this pursuit (Sport) does, misfortune, sickness, and injustice, nor effecting destruction;

producing only that which is right and good in the sight of God and man?

MEDAD.

Why do you treat this occupation so badly, regarding it as an outsider doomed to destruction? Look around, and you'll observe that the same arguments apply to every pursuit in which man is engaged, some get poor, others become rich through them; nay, more, some have elements of evil in them which may cause much more injury than gambling, and yet they are constantly in the running. To take a few examples: What about those who go to sea in ships, and cargo them with thousands of pounds' worth of spices, balm and myrrh, silk, purple, scarlet, woollen and linen garments, confiding them simply to a cedar-plank, which is sent upon the ocean at the mercy of the winds? Should the owner of these wares be on board, his life also is in danger; at times there is but one step between him and death, for if God would cause the breeze to turn to a strong wind and dash it against a rock, in an instant it would

upset and be shattered, no one being able to rescue, and the man would lose his life and his wealth together.

I tell you, better one handful of satisfaction obtained in a game by the handling of cards and dice than two handfuls of the worry endured by those who travel by sea, who are in constant anxiety as regards the wind, watching whether it comes from the north, east, or west.

Next, I'll take those who are fond of the art of Alchemy. These say in their hearts: "In place of copper I will bring gold"; they pretend to manufacture pure sterling silver out of quicksilver; they waste their days between the oven and the range, blowing the coal with fire until it becomes hot, and exhausting their own breath. Now these persons surely scatter that which they really possess; whilst instead of the silver which they long to make, they lose the silver they once had in the attempt to make more. They indulge in many schemes, working in gold, silver and copper, the result being that they make one slip after another; and then they fall in their misfortune altogether, coming down from

gold to silver, from silver to copper, and ultimately to the level in which their faces are covered with shame, falling into disgrace.

Then again there are some who are so very glad of the opportunity to quarrel and fight, that they do not stop short at dragging a man before the magistrate for the sake of a penny. They will give their counsel, or the one who pleads on their behalf, whether present or absent at the trial, to the secretaries and notaries (of the court), their fees to-day and to-morrow, and over and over again if necessary, until they will leave with empty pockets, drained of their resources even to the last farthing or half-farthing. It may even happen that there may be a miscarriage of justice, and the guilty defendant may gain the day into the bargain, in which case the Scriptural text holds good: "They do not understand how to judge" (Psalm cxlvii. 20).

Furthermore, there are many ways in which a man may shed his life-blood, in other words, lose his money, besides gambling; and yet no one speaks against them with anything like the same aversion.

I need but adduce in support of my contention regarding the legitimacy of this kind of occupation the saying of the Rabbis of the Talmud (*Bab. M. z. 29 b.*): "There is no surer way for a man to lose the fortune which his father had left him than to dress in expensive (linen) clothing, to use china services, and to have a staff of dependents without looking after them."

Now if, according to your view, they had thought that gambling was equally a means of losing money, why did not the Rabbis add the words: "Let him go and play." This indicates that it is included in the same category as the other pursuits which partake of monetary transactions; there are times even when a little folly or nonsense avails more than knowledge and honour.

#### ELDAD.

Why are you defending a position devoid of strength, and trying to justify a pursuit which fills the world with robbery? It's a saying as old as the hills, having come down to me from my grandfather, that there are three primary sins in the

world, the sources of all evils, and these are gambling, gormandising, and whoring, hinted at in the three Scriptural terms occurring in Deuteronomy xviii. 3, "the shoulder, the cheeks, and the maw" (the physical organs employed in the three acts referred to); but the worst of all things, and particularly base, is the act of gambling.

We might even add, that as regards the other two, they come to man naturally, by reason of the evil inclination resident within him, which is drawing him on and inciting him, saying, in one case: "Snatch and eat, be quick and drink, etc." . . . "Shall not the palate taste its food?" In the other case, that of the "strange woman who flattereth with her words," who brings many victims low, and it may also be said, that as "all flesh is grass," the one hour of imagined satisfaction which man enjoys in this world is the net spread (for his downfall), for while he is enjoying his desires, which are fleeting, he forgets the life which is eternal.

But what can be said in favour of, or to the advantage of the sporting propensity, which cannot be

classed under the head of desire natural to man, belonging neither to "the easy-going pleasures of the wicked, nor to the hardships incidental to the lot of the righteous"? What boots it a man if he indulge in it, and what profit is it unto him, except that it engenders the bitterest of pangs, when he swoons and pours forth his plaint, and in bitterness of spirit curses God and the King; or it causes him to cast wistful eyes on another's purse, leading either to the gallows, or to his plunging his own sword into his heart when the money is gone, or he has no rest within himself.

Furthermore, when a man has once eaten to satisfaction, having blessed the Lord his God for what he has enjoyed, when his stomach is full, he can eat no more, until the mill of the organs of digestion has done its work, and discharged the overplus; or in old age, when "the grinders are few," the desire for food abates; nevertheless, eating within limits, so as to repair the waste going on in the human body, is a function indispensable to the life of man.

The same may be said of the men who "give



their strength unto women"; the pleasure once indulged, the desire passes, so that as time advances and age creeps on, "the silver cord of that desire is loosened," he makes a virtue of his necessity—"it becomes the steadfastness of his time," whilst Nature has determined that it is "the way of a man with a maid" (Prov. xxx. 19).

But as far as concerns gambling, it is not a natural instinct, but an evil devised by man himself, stopping at no time between youth and old age. For, whether a man gains or loses, "the eyes of man are never satisfied" (ibid. xxvii. 20); with specious arguments he says to himself, "I shall return to my post," but he never leaves off or gives it up, "and at his end he shall prove himself the fool" (Jer. xvii. 11).

#### MEDAD.

Your prejudice has raised arguments—"your hatred stirreth up strife" (Prov. x. 12)—against gambling, so as to make you condemn it more than all other diversions, but the case is not as you put it; for the first two evils to which you refer are sins in themselves, more especially to be considered so

by us of Israel, those who keep the Law of the Lord ; but as regards gambling, according to your own showing, it is but a stepping-stone to wrongdoing, and it is not the way to impose a restriction in order to ward off another restriction.

The glutton and the drunkard are stoned, for the simple reason that their apparently harmless indulgence might urge them to eat of forbidden meats out of pure desire ; and an adulterer, in destroying his very life and soul, for he commits an abomination and a punishable offence, might be led to the further commission of the sin of "marrying the daughter of a strange god" (Malachi ii. 11), or he might come in unto his neighbour's wife—"a crooked thing which cannot be made straight" (Eccl. i. 15). May God protect us against such, for hell and destruction is their dwelling and their death-chamber!

Sport, on the other hand, is simply a question of money. It is perfectly fair and proper, and there is no risk of profanation connected with it. God employs it in his own delightful way as a beneficial and proper agent to bring upon man

either a curse or a blessing, and in this respect it is in no wise different from the rest of the commercial pursuits in which mankind engages.

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### CHAPTER III.

*In which Eldad endeavours to prove that the gambler trespasses each one of the Ten Commandments, and Medad retorts.*

#### ELDAD.

If with all human effort you draw out words and arguments to institute a comparison between gaming and commerce, in order to prove that one is similar to the other, inasmuch as they both equally tend to increase or diminish one's possessions, wealth and the coveted things of this world; I would still ask, how you could possibly defend this pursuit when it is understood that "they who walk in its ways are workers of iniquity"; each commits thereby an act of rebellion towards his Maker, and gradually estranges himself from Him, since he takes money from his fellow-man by wicked and

thievish methods, without giving him a *quid pro quo*, and without any labour on his own part.

If you go into the matter thoroughly, you will see that the gambler trespasses all the Ten Commandments, the very foundation of the Law of Moses and of his Prophecy, acknowledged not alone by the people of Israel, holy unto the Lord, but also by those nations among whom we dwell. First, with regard to those Commandments from the words "I am the Lord thy God" unto the fourth, "Remember the Sabbath Day." These all warn against the sin of idolatry: and beyond doubt he trespasses against each one of them. For, as soon as his star is unlucky, and he loses everything, he will be beside himself, will grow full of fury and anger; and it is clear to us that our Rabbis were right when they said that "the man of anger is like the idolator" (in forgetting his God). They have even expressed the same idea more clearly when they remarked: "A gambler is as an idolator," basing their dictum on the Scriptural phrases "And Sarah saw the son of Hagar . . . playing" (Gen. xxi. 9): "And the people sat down to eat

and drink, and they rose up to play" (Exod. xxxii. 6).

As regards the third Commandment: "Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord Thy God in vain," etc., it is self-evident to all, that at every moment during play, at every opportunity for sinning, or differences among players, a man will commit perjury, he will swear thousands of vain and false oaths, dragging his soul down to earth—a dark and weary outlook.

And how easily the Commandment referring to the Sabbath-day is broken! A man is playing on Sabbath-eve, near dusk; the loser, in the forlorn hope of winning back what he has lost; the winner, whose greed for gain is not satisfied, hoping to make more, suddenly find that the Sabbath has overtaken them, and they have infringed the sanctity of the day. In many other ways, too, this can happen to players.

The "honouring of father and mother" is equally jeopardised by this pursuit. Properly speaking, it is the duty of father and mother to correct and chastise the son who is addicted to gambling, in

the endeavour to bring him back ; but the son who is steeped in this sort of thing, which has become to him as second nature, will give them no ear, he answers them harshly, and this is a source of bitterness to their lives ; for he has ignored the command "A man shall fear his mother and his father" (Levit. xix. 3).

Furthermore, when a man realises that he has lost his money, the fire of envy and hatred will burn within him against his fellow-man, or he will seek a pretext to quarrel with him, remarking, "The game was not so," calling him a wicked scoundrel, anxious to rob him of his own ; the other will retort, and the discussion, having become heated, we cannot predict where it will end. It may even be that each will draw his sword, so that one gets killed, and the command of the Lord, "Thou shalt not murder," be transgressed.

A gambler will mix with loose women ; in his rage he will utter obscene and filthy expressions, and concerning such a sin our Rabbis have said, "The one who defiles his mouth with unhallowed words has no share in the bliss of the world to come."

Words are the index to actions ; the mouth makes the first move, and the organs of action do the rest. This is all contained in the prohibition : "Thou shalt not commit adultery."

Now, when he has been left destitute, left entirely without money, it is natural that all his thoughts are misdirected the livelong day ; he broods upon how he may steal secretly, or rob his fellow-creatures openly, hoping by this means to make up for his deficiencies, with the result that he will be like "the chief baker, Pharaoh's servant," hanging between Heaven and earth, for not having observed the warning : "Thou shalt not steal."

It may happen, too, in the course of a game with his friend, that they may form a compact to share the profits equally, and a misunderstanding arising, a third party is called in to arbitrate ; but he, being a friend of one of the players, gives the decision in favour of that friend, to wit, unjustly ; what becomes now of the command, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour" ? It is thrown overboard.

And it stands to reason, that if a man is not

particular with regard to the law of stealing, he will be less careful as regards the prohibition, "Thou shalt not covet"; for whatever his eyes see, his heart will desire with a longing which will never satisfy the eye of covetousness.

Consider and answer now, whether the evil of this wicked pastime is not monstrous enough to reach unto Heaven (and draw down punishment)—a pastime which sets aside every precept of the Law of the Living God, both written and traditional, and the end of which is bound to be bitter as wormwood: surely the one who touches such a diversion cannot go unpunished!

#### MEDAD.

You have employed many words to condemn this sport, but you have nevertheless said nothing effectual to cast a stigma upon it which might not apply equally to every other human pursuit. For "anger resteth in the bosom of fools" even in trivial matters, but the sensible man is patient at all times.

This is my experience. I saw a man yesterday losing 400 gold-pieces, and he never uttered a word



by way of cursing his luck; only once he exclaimed; "Thou, O Lord, art righteous!" On the other hand, I knew a man who, on receipt of the news that corn had depreciated in value (he was a corn and wine-dealer), went up to the roof, threw himself down, and was killed.

And where will you find the occasion for more wicked and perplexing oaths than among merchants, which they employ to confirm their statements in the course of buying and selling?

And with regard to your apprehension as to the violation of the Sabbath, this may apply as well to the tailor, shoemaker, and every other workman who is desirous of increasing his profits.

There are, furthermore, many other diversions which might lead to the breaking of the command to "honour father and mother," or to the commission of murder and adultery.

And the same is the case with stealing, which a poor fellow in straitened circumstances justifies by saying, it is not for stealing that he is hanged, but owing to his unlucky star, and hard times.

As far as concerns false swearing, this may occur

in any form of partnership ; and covetousness, even outside gaming is well known to reside naturally in the heart of man.

To sum up the matter : a perfectly righteous person will be as upright in commercial pursuits as in sport or anything else ; whilst a wicked person will act wickedly in the one matter as in the other. And now, finally, I say, go and reflect upon this one point. If, as you insist, this is such robbery and an intolerable sin, why did not our Rabbis of old prohibit it to us and our descendants in a clear, decisive and express manner ? Considering, too, as is well known, that their object was ever to keep us aloof, not alone from transgression and wickedness itself, but even from that which in a remote degree might lead to its commission, and they therefore, in their exalted and perfect wisdom, instituted one fence and safeguard upon another to protect the law—what conclusion can we arrive at from the consideration that they never lifted up their voice against this diversion, but that they found therein nothing of vice or vanity, as you would have us believe ?

## CHAPTER IV.

*In which Eldad wishes to prove from the Talmud and other later Rabbinic works that the gambler is disqualified from acting either as judge or witness, while Medad tries to argue the contrary from these very works.*

## ELDAD.

Even though you may be versed in the Bible, you have learnt nothing of Rabbinic literature, if you mean to assert that the writings of our Teachers contain no statements in disparagement of gambling and in prohibition thereof.

"Come, I will take you to one place . . . you shall see but one part" of its shame, namely, that passage contains in the Treatise *Sanhedrin*, ch. iii., where it states: "The following are disqualified (from taking part in judgment):—the one who gambles with cards and dice, the one who lends money at usurious rates, pigeon-flyers, and dealers in the prohibited produce of the year of release": to which R. Jehuda adds, "provided that this is their sole occupation"; while the commentator

"Rashi" explains that those enumerated above all partake of the character of thieves; and Scripture cautions: "Put not thy hand with the wicked to be witness of violence" (Exod. xxiii. 1).

The question asked in the *Gemara* with reference to the classes of gamblers stated above is, "What sin do they commit?" and the answer given in the name of Rabbi Shesheth is, that they are not engaged in anything adding to the civilization of the world.

I ask you, what better evidence could the Rabbis have given to show that they regarded these pursuits as vile and unlawful, than by disqualifying all those who followed such callings from judging, or acting as witnesses, and by including them in the category "wicked" and "men of violence"?

The very words of R. Shesheth are a refutation of your former arguments in favour of this pastime, when you said that it might be compared to the other pursuits indispensable to any civilized community, for he clearly states that this does not contribute to the support of the world; and the same decision has been upheld by earlier and

later Rabbis, who have simply confirmed and strengthened the view that it is entirely unlawful.

Maimonides, in the sixth chapter of his treatise on "Robbery," writes: The gambler, according to the Rabbis, is guilty of an act of robbery, for in spite of the fact that he takes the money with the knowledge and consent of the owner, nevertheless, since he obtains it by way of play and fraud, and gives nothing in return, he must be regarded as robbing his neighbour. And even in such instances in which the direct charge of robbery would not apply, (when, for example, a man plays with a sharper), yet the player sins, for he is guilty of wasting his time in frivolous pursuits, while it should be his business to engage in such wise and sensible work as tends to the civilization of mankind. In a similar strain Maimonides pursues the subject more fully in the treatises referring to "witnesses" and "selling," etc.

In the work, too, known as the "Semag" (*Sepher Miṣvoth Gedoloth*) it is written: The Rabbis held that a gambler was a robber; and the book *Tur* and the *Responso* of R. Shelomo b. Adereth con-

tain the same view, namely, that it is unlawful to play cards and dice.

How, then, can you possibly assert that "there is no speech nor language, on the part of the Rabbis, and that their voice is not heard" in denunciation of gaming, when they thrust it aside with both hands, and say unto us: "Depart, draw not near, nor approach it."

MEDAD.

Don't be in such haste to reply to me, and to draw your argument from that passage in "*Sanhedrin*" which you quoted, for I am well aware and am not ignorant of the fact that every Rabbinic authority who had anything to urge against playing has drawn his support from that self-same passage. And even if we take it as a law, settled and fixed, that, according to the Rabbis, the gambler cannot legally act as judge or witness in any suit, they suffer no loss of dignity or prestige, when we consider that in this respect they simply labour under the same disability as a King; and in reality, in consequence of this legislation, they are rendered free from sin, no mishaps being pos-

sible on their account.. For do we not read in the treatise of the *Pirké Aboth* ("Ethics of the Fathers") that "he who holds himself aloof from law-matters keeps himself free from enmity, robbery, etc."? So far so good; but it is in reality not the case that players are disqualified from participating in the administration of justice because their business savours of robbery.

Remember, we referred before to the question asked in the *Gemara* in this connection: "What is the actual sin in card and dice-playing?" and Rabbi Shesheth replied that one might be better employed in the work of doing something for the world's progress. Now since the question is put in the form: "What sin does he commit?" it must occur to everyone that, according to the *Gemara*, a player ought not to be disqualified, inasmuch as it does not regard him as a thief. Wherein then consists his guilt?

This is made clear by the dictum of R. Shesheth, namely, that he contributes not by his vocation to the world's progress.

Even "Rashi," who holds that all gambling is

a sort of robbery, did not really mean that sport of this kind is prohibited because of its being *actual* robbery, for he distinctly uses the expression "a sort of robbery"—there being no reciprocal benefit in the pursuit; even at the present day the idler and loafer are punished, not for any specific wrong which they have committed, but as a precaution against their ultimately being guilty of some misdemeanour.

Furthermore, in the work "Nimuké Joseph" there is a long disquisition as to the question whether the idea of robbery or not is uppermost in the minds of those who disqualify players, on account of their engaging in the risky game of chance or betting.

Besides R. Shesheth and R. Jehuda practically agree in their attitude regarding playing, for the latter only prohibits it when it is a man's sole occupation, but regards it as lawful when it is a diversion or pastime, and he has some other means of livelihood.

Consequently my position is unassailable, and cannot fall to the ground. For, certainly, it is self-evident that the man who plies but one calling does



not add anything to the support of the world. Our Sages applied this principle even to the study of the Torah; for they held that "all learning which has no other occupation combined with it must ultimately become neutralised, and a source of sinfulness." And if this be the case with the Torah, how much more with games of chance and other pursuits, when they are a man's only means of passing the time?

I should mention, moreover, what the author of the commentary called "*Magid Mishna*" has to say upon the opinion of Moses Maimonides, who holds that the view of the Rabbis was that "gambling was robbery." He remarks: it seems rather strange to me that he should hold this opinion, for in the debate in the Talmud the plea of robbery is not upheld, nor, in other words, that being a case of betting, the winner is not entitled to possession, more especially in view of the opinion of R. Shesheth, that when a man loses at play, he does so with his eyes open, and makes up his mind beforehand to give up his money. How then can Maimonides attribute the said view to Rabbinic

authority? This requires consideration; the more so, as he himself decides the point (in his Treatise on "Testimony," ch. x.), that only in the case in which a man follows no other occupation can the player be disqualified and deprived of the aforementioned rights.

The same view is expressed in the "Semag" (§ 214) under the head of "the prohibitive commands."

From all this you will understand that there are circumstances and conditions in which the very authorities which you have quoted as your proof in favour of prohibiting sport, would allow it. And what is the use of continuing to argue? All the various opinions of the greatest authorities have been collected by its author in the work "Shilté Haggi-borim": he has carefully weighed them, and pitted one against the other, coming ultimately to the conclusion that it is permitted to play for ready money, "when the cash is on the board," for in such a case the idea of betting does not apply, the results of games in which skill does not enter being considered valid, and entitling the

winner to the right of possession. When, however, the Rabbis referred to gambling as robbery, they had in mind playing on credit, in which instance the winner could recover his due only by means of a law-suit, for practically all agree that this is real betting; there is, nevertheless, some opinion that betting does not enter into the question. The author deals exhaustively with the subject.

And this excellent advice is proffered,—let all players lay it ever to heart,—that it is by no means a good thing for people to play on credit, without ready money being on the table.

Besides, we know of old that, among our immediate and more remote ancestors, there were always wise and sensible men who did not refrain from having a game—"I would not bring their names upon my lips," for it would be unbecoming; and my daily experience confirms the fact that scholars and scientists are not particular in this matter, and "rise to play," for they are but too well aware of the Rabbinic decision on this point.

Listen, further, and you will confess that the bad name given to playing is simply sheer pre-

judice. For we find in the Talmud that the card-player and the usurer, being mentioned side by side, are placed on the same footing. Now we know how much greater is the wrong done by usury than by card and dice playing; for the former is distinctly forbidden in the Torah, while the latter, as shown above, is not even forbidden absolutely by the Rabbis. Yet, if we observe the times in which we live, we shall see how complimentary and respectful people often are to the usurer; not only are they not disqualified from acting in the capacity of judge or witness, but, on the contrary, their evidence often counts against a hundred witnesses; they are our men of position, our magistrates, our judges, and our leaders, even though their houses contain the spoil of the poor. They interpret in their own way the words of Scripture: "Of the stranger thou mayest exact usury, but not of thy brother," and "their bite is indeed the bite of a fox."

Now, as regards professional players, what do we see? As a rule, they are driven into a corner, cut to pieces and despoiled, called "worthless fel-

lows," and woe unto the man who does not join the general chorus of indignation against them!

And having endeavoured to show that gaming with cards and dice is, after all, not so vain and wicked a thing, I will go a step further and prove to you that it contains elements of positive good, for there does not exist a better test and touchstone of human nature, trying it as one would the quality of silver and gold. It will tell you all about the qualities of the player, whether they are good or bad; whether he is a babbler, or one easily roused to anger, whether he is happy, generous, or contented; and whatever you can glean of his qualities, you may learn on the first occasion that you play with him.

This is just what our Sages meant when they said that "you can tell a man by three things, by his drinking, his spending, and his temper"—some adding, by his writing, others, by his play, for in the latter, pocket and temper are included; whilst playing is a better index of character than either drinking or writing.

There is even a great moral advantage that might

accrue to a man from the fact of his losing, and it is this: it will train and accustom him to bear with the ills of life; he will not be bowed down by anxiety when the demand comes upon him unexpectedly to spend, and spend freely, as the one is wont to do "who is settled on his leas." For he has learnt the lesson by daily experience at the card-table, that when he thought to win, he lost; that it was a matter of ups and downs; and so he comes to understand clearly that there is no such thing with us mortals as constant and permanent possessions. Hence, should any calamity overtake him, he will "bless God for the evil as for the good," and even though it might involve the absolute loss of his money, he will simply say to himself, "What can I do? Let me imagine I lost it at play." This will be his comfort, and he will magnify the blessed Name of God amid all conditions of life.

There is another point which is not to be ignored. By playing, a man's mental vision becomes vaster, his wits are sharpened, he may learn arithmetic without a master, he may acquire the science of language and logic, and how to persuade his partner.

He may even learn, incidentally, through playing the art of drawing and geometry, for mathematical instruments enter into the fashioning of cards and dice.

Finally, the sporting-man, especially the one who deals with cards and dice, may be said (playing upon the words of Scripture) to have "his hand in everything, and the hand of every art in him." The Hebrew equivalent for the term "in everything" **בכל** has the numerical value 52, just the number of cards in a pack; and the numerical value of the word **וי** ("and the hand"), namely 20, plus 1, (to stand for the word itself), thus (21) equals the number of spots on each die.

Thus even can a man learn the lessons of "justice, kindness and humility" amid this diversion, and teach them unto others.

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## CHAPTER V.

*In which Eldad produces a poem composed in contempt of Gambling, and Medad replies with a poem in the same metre in its favour.*

## ELDAD.

What will you now say about that fine and beautiful poem composed, as I understand, by one of the most excellent scholars, which dilates upon the evils of gambling? Listen to it and pay heed!

## AGAINST GAMES OF CHANCE.

## I

Who lives by chance, by cards and dice,  
Will find himself soon desolate,  
And suff'ring all the ills of vice,  
He'll curse his lot in the city gate.

## 2

What he holds, that he'll stake,  
And not think of his ties,  
Saying, his fortune he'll make,  
'Mid oaths and 'mid lies.

## 3

He dreams he will win,  
But ill-luck is his brother,  
Sin follows on sin,  
And his days are all pother.

## 4

He hath not hearth nor home,  
Save the doorway or the sills,  
Or heaven's vaulted dome,  
When skipping o'er the hills.



## 5

See the result of his lust,—  
The Pascha or Succah  
He'd fain change for the dust,  
To win back his lucre.

## 6

His hair is not curled,  
And his clothes are all torn ;  
To himself and the world,  
He is ill and forlorn.

## 7

With him Blessing and Grace,  
Are things of the past,  
'Tis proclaimed by his face,  
E'en on the Great Fast.

## 8

So having left them for years,  
His own now forsake him,  
And shed but few tears,  
When God calls to take him.

## MEDAD.

Lead me not into temptation (and false conclusions) through this poem, composed probably by some player in his passion, or by one who had never been able to see the science of the game ; no won-

der that he spoke in derision of sport. In spite of the fact that it has been attributed to the scholar, Ibn Ezra, or to R. David Kimchi, I say that such a thing never really entered their minds ; and this is proved by its defects. It has the appearance of a poem, but is yet no poem, for it violates the rules of poetry, both by reason of the matter and the metre.

Now you listen to me, and I will reply with a poem composed on similar lines, but yet more correct as regards metre and rhythm : the only fault and pity being that it is necessary to answer the fool according to his folly. Incline thine ear and listen.

#### IN DEFENCE OF GAMES OF CHANCE.

##### 1

Who lives by chance, by cards and dice,  
Will find the lord and squire his mate,  
He'll gain the day whate'er the price,  
And sit in joy at the city gate.

##### 2

And if to God it seemeth well,  
That he should lose his all,

It means that God doth tell  
His sin, wishing him to fall.

## 3

He may win, he may lose,  
As the merchant or banker,  
It's but to amuse,—  
And after this all men hanker.

## 4

Each man tries the game,  
That makes or that kills;  
Both the fleet and the lame,  
Must skip o'er the hills.

## 5

And so on Succoth at least,  
Sport is his Thummim and Urim,  
And on Hanucah's feast,  
On Pesach and Purim.

## 6

He's the devil's own child,  
Who steals and is lavish  
To the dissolute wild,  
To whom men are slavish;

## 7

Tho' he gobble in haste,  
To say "Grace" at repast,  
And has nothing to taste  
On the great Day of the Fast.

## 8

Sport is decent and grand,  
In chasing all sadness,—  
The true Promised Land,  
Full of singing and gladness !

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## CHAPTER VI.

*In which Eldad tries to speak to the heart of his opposing friend and to conjure him to acknowledge the truth, and Medad obeys and does so without being ashamed.*

## ELDAD.

My dear Medad, the Almighty has blessed you with a "mouth uttering great things," and with an intelligence and knowledge in all that thou turnest thyself unto; for I observe how shrewd thou art in thy wisdom, pronouncing that which is unclean clean, and the clean unclean, so that none can confuse thee. I have all along observed how, by reason of the sharpness of thy wits, thou art able to prove the reptile clean in seventy different ways, and this same method thou hast applied in all our conver-

sation concerning Sport; thou hast demolished the entire battery of my best arguments, thou hast reduced to earth all that I have advanced in opposition to it, and thou hast shown forth the sporting man as one capable of only doing that which is just and righteous.

Not that this was really the true attitude in your estimation, knowing as you did that the one who praises gambling speaketh falsely, and would only be laughed at; but I know full well that in your innermost soul, and in your secret thoughts, this pursuit was clearly regarded by you as a hellish trade, an evil prompting, a very agent of destruction. Your motive in defending it was simply to prove the goodness of something base, for if one might really boast of his attainments, it would be in the case of one who is clever enough to praise the bad and blame the good, merely to show the world that he has a shrewd head, of course intending ultimately to confess to the truth.

Similarly, "I now conjure thee by Heaven, and thou wilt not deal falsely with me," and by the standard of our affection, which is unending, to declare

now if it be really your opinion, and whether by your life you really believe, that sporting is a true and just pursuit, or what you think of it. And may I beg of you to eradicate out of your being the root of every thought which might cause you to turn to it, so that in future you may rather watch at the doorposts and gates of the Houses of Learning, or apply yourself to the ways and means of earning a livelihood.

MEDAD.

You have conjured me in such a way that I can no longer conceal the truth and fail to acknowledge what I really, in my innermost thoughts, hold concerning the matter.

The reason why I almost staked my very life on behalf of Sport, and tried to prove that it possessed some merit (as you rightly observed), to demonstrate that the evil was good and that the good was evil, was merely for the purpose of sharpening my own wits, which, in consequence of my indolent life during several years past, had become somewhat clouded.

But now understand that I am also quite aware

of the fact that gambling is essentially and entirely a vain and most wicked occupation. And in spite of the consideration that the lottery is only an evidence of the Finger of God, and that when all is said and done, all human occupations are guided by heavenly causes, and that in this respect there is no difference between one and the other; nevertheless, it is improper for man to subject himself absolutely and without limitation to the Decree of Fate, either to lay in wait for the blood of his neighbour—I mean his money—and to use it up, or wilfully of his own accord to endanger himself by losing his own money, for this is certainly not the decree of the unity of the world: it is rather that “the prudent man shall look well to his happiness,” and God will support him according to His will.

But as for those who gamble, they engage in none of the ordinary labours of man; for all they care, they prefer to destroy the world and create a new one, thinking that it might possibly come to an end while they are troubling to find their living.

There are three things which our eyes and all

our longings are fixed upon, namely, health, wealth, and happiness ; and I have come to the conclusion that not one of these the gambler possesses, nay, they are far removed from him.

As regards the first, health, what a wretched and painful life he leads! His heart trembles within him ; he eats (in as uncouth a manner) as Ben Drosai ; and as far as concerns his sleep, he neither sleeps nor slumbers. The noise of warfare, the cry of strife reign in his house, contention with his own parents and supporters, as well as with his wife and children—the gifts of God's grace. "For the blood," the money-bag, "is the life" ; and when the purse is empty there can be no soundness of the flesh, because the man is troubled and agitated, and continually brooding.

In the second place, such players "only imagine vain things." They fully believe that they will be able to support their household out of their winnings ; the truth, however is, that whatever money is gained in this manner, as it came in vanity, so it goes in some obscure way ; to-day forsooth, the cash-box—"the bottle"—is filled with coin, to-



morrow it emits the hollow sound of emptiness. "A man heapeth up riches, but knoweth not who shall gather them."

It is a common experience that many men have lost fortunes in cards and dice and similar sports; but very few have put wealth and honour into their pockets by their means—so few, that a child could write them down.

But more particularly we Jews, miserable through being scattered to the four corners of the earth, our lands in the possession of strangers, having nothing but our bodies which we may call our own, all the wealth and grandeur of our kingdom being concentrated in the few coppers and moveables which we hold in our hands, we should remember that "the man who enters this fool's paradise" and plays, will suddenly light on evil days, and then he will bargain away his very soul; for the Jew can no longer boast of the light and gladness which were his, when (in his own country) he possessed fields, vineyards and landed property in perpetuity. Therefore let not the Jew who would live expect to derive happiness from this pursuit.

Thirdly, this occupation is the worst of all evils ; for of all the evils which exist in our times, this is the worst agent of sin. As you rightly observed, it transgresses each one of the Ten Commandments. And I firmly believe that if, in the early times of the world's history, the children of Israel had hankered after this folly in the same way as they do at the present day, not only would our Sages have issued a ban in connection with it throughout Israel, but it would even have been forbidden by Heaven, by the words, "Thou shalt not gamble," just as it was said, "Thou shalt not murder"; "thou shalt not commit adultery"; "thou shalt not steal."

The fact, however, is that our people could never have been suspected of such nonsense, of the folly of wasting the precious hours of life, which we should spend in such work as is pleasing to our Creator, such as is necessary and indispensable for our existence.

But as it is, what joy and happiness does the player hope to find in the very "festival of the Lord, the holy convocations?" Where is the joy

when one loses?—The festival is soon turned into mourning for many a one.

Now, to sum up the whole business! The gambler is, in fine, a stubborn and rebellious subject as regards the law of the land and the Law of God, "which Moses placed before the Children of Israel." The one who enters upon this path, and remains therein, shall not see the Eternal in the land of the living; but—sufficient for the time is the evil thereof.

We have said enough to enlighten the human being as to the shortcomings of this pursuit, for the purpose of rescuing him from its clutches; for it might well be said, touching cards and dice, "Happy the man who sees them not!" "I have tried everything in wisdom," and there is none so wise as the man of experience; and I now avow, I repent and regret it, I shall no more look upon its face; and I make this unqualified resolution to withdraw from it once and for all, and to stifle every thought of it that may yet linger within me. Thou hast, indeed, chastised me, and I stand corrected; I will receive thy correction, and listen to

thy counsel. And should this hideous monster ever in the future assail me, I shall avoid all contact with it, by betaking myself to College, and studying matters of more momentary concern; or by applying myself to commercial matters, whereby I shall be able to support myself and my family with the help of Him "who giveth strength to the weary," and encouragement to all who resolve to improve and do better things.

ELDAD.

May God bless you of all men, and be with you to direct aright and establish all that is in your heart to do, now that you have removed the veil of this folly from your eyes!

May I witness the comfort of our people as sure as I was afflicted and dejected at all times that I heard concerning you that you indulged in play; and I marvelled within myself how it was possible for so evil a propensity to co-exist with those other goodly and admirable qualities and capacities which you possess. And more and more did I groan and wail with grief when I heard you praise and extol it with your own mouth; I exclaimed,

"The mouth that is fit rather for study and research, what a search and study does it pursue!"

Now that I have heard your explanation, that your intention was but to sharpen your intellect by revolving the matter in your mind and debating upon it, and that you have made up your mind to return from enduring the service of this sinful propensity and never again to pass through it, you have indeed rejoiced me, and my spirit has become revived.

And may you be rewarded for the kindness through which you have permitted me to listen *en passant* to your pleasant words, and to your choice and eloquent language in the course of the debate!

MEDAD.

Let us continue our journey, so that we may come to the city, for the sun has set, and the day has waned. There will be many a day yet on which we shall discourse on Scriptural topics, for happy they who find their labour in the Holy Torah. Verily "it is a Tree of Life to those who take firm hold on it, and they who support her are made happy," both in this world and in the world to come.











